SWAMI SIVANANDA:
SAINT, SAGE & GODMAN

Swami Chidananda

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Discourses by

SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Worshipful Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj has brought about a spiritual awakening and resurgence of moral and ethical values throughout the world by his very inspiring writings consisting of more than three hundred books. He is literally a world teacher. He has written on every aspect of philosophy and Sadhana. He has written for everyone. The all-comprehensive vastness of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji's writings makes an aspirant to ask, 'What is his vision? What is his most important message? What are his most important teachings?'

Gurudev preached only those things which he himself had practised most diligently over a long period. So the best way to find answers to these basic questions is to study his life and personality. Those were the most blessed persons who had the good fortune of staying in the Sivananda Ashram as disciples during his lifetime. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, President, The Divine Life Society, had that good fortune for two decades and is, therefore, the most appropriate authority to dilate upon these questions. In these talks, he has brought out the inherent salient teachings from Gurudev's life and thrown light on Gurudev's vision, his real message and his most important teachings. These talks were given in Gurudev's Samadhi Shrine from 26th July to 10th August, 1987.

This book will prove to be an invaluable treasure for all sincere seekers, Sadhakas and householders and inspire them to tread on righteous living and to strive for the goal of life, God-realisation.

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

PREFACE

Blessed are those who are born in this sacred land Bharatavarsha. Right from the ancient times, this land has produced great seers, sages and saints, Tattva-vettas and Brahma-jnanis. These men of wisdom have laid down various ideals and duties of life and have given outline of the structure of a man's life. They have stressed that the purpose of life is God-realisation and attaining the state of absolute Peace, Bliss and Happiness. They have warned us that the indulgence in sensual pleasures result in pain, sorrow, diseases and unhappiness. The only way of getting real happiness and going beyond sorrow is realising your real Self by practising continuously Sadhana, austerity and mind-control.

Unfortunately we had neglected and forgotten our rich cultural heritage, invaluable legacy and basic values of life, and slipped into a dark era. With the coming of the western civilisation a wild goose chase after materialism began and some people even started condemning, degrading and ridiculing our own wisdom teachings. Towards the end of the nineteenth century a resurgence began with the advent of great saints like Sri Ramakrishna Dev Paramhamsa and his disciples Swami Vivekananda and others, Swami Rama Tirtha, Sri Ramana Maharshi, Swami Ramdas and others.

The most significant contribution in this resurgence and restoration of righteous living and spiritual values is of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji. Sri Gurudev wrote more than three hundred books in English and a great many of them have been translated in almost all our country's vernacular languages and a number of foreign languages like French, German, Spanish, Italian, etc. Thus Gurudev's message of spiritual awakening reached countless thousands of homes throughout the length and breadth of the country and the world.

His language is simple and the teachings are direct. He explained the most subtle subjects of our scriptures in such a simple way that anyone can easily understand them even at first reading. He preached only those things which he himself had practised for a long time. His teachings are not empty words of bookish knowledge. They penetrate the heart of the reader and inspire the reader onto spiritual pursuits and sincere Sadhana. I am, therefore, never tired of speaking again and again on Gurudev's ever inspiring wonderful teachings and his life of austerity, highest Sadhana and total inner detachment and dispassion.

So, when the Swami Sivananda Centenary Celebrations Central Committee asked me to speak on Gurudev's life and his teachings, I readily accepted it. There is another reason also. Gurudev has written so many books on all subjects related to Sadhana and there are numerous biographies on his life that a modern man may not be able to read them all and get a clear direction as to what his real message is, on what he emphasised more, and what type of Sadhana he wanted his disciples to take up. Therefore I have tried to focus attention on those points which make Gurudev's vision clear and which are most relevant and useful to the Sadhakas and to the householders. Gurudev's life and his spiritual practices are always a source of inspiration to all sincere Sadhakas. I have touched upon certain aspects and incidents of his life, which had some inherent salient teachings and left a lasting impact on us—the resident disciples.

May the divine grace of God and Gurudev's choicest blessings be upon all those who have contributed and helped in bringing out this book and upon all the readers. May you all follow Gurudev's teachings to attain Perfection and supreme Bliss in this very birth.

Swami Chidananda

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SWAMI SIVANANDA

A BRIEF LIFE SKETCH

On the 8th September, 1887, in the early hours of the morning was born a boy-child in the village Pattamadai on the bank of the river Tamraparni in district Tirunelveli, the south-most part of India. Sri P. S. Vengu Iyer, a Tahsildar and a great Siva-Bhakta and Smt. Parvati Ammal—an equally great God-fearing lady were the fortunate parents of this child. The happy couple named this third and last son of theirs, Kuppuswami.

His ancestor, Maha-mahopadhyaya Sri Appayya Deekshitar was a very famous and unrivalled Sanskrit scholar and attained the highest spiritual state. In Tamil Nadu he is held in reverence next to Lord Siva only. His grandfather was a Zamindar in Pattamadai. His uncle Appayya Sivam was a great Sanskrit Scholar and has written many philosophical books in Sanskrit. His father, a Tahsildar in Ettaiyapuram estate, was a virtuous, pure soul a Siva-bhakta and a Jnani. He used to shed tears worshipping Lord Siva and used to utter Sivoham, Sivoham frequently.

In his boyhood itself he showed signs of renunciation and love for all, and the spirit of giving freely, of sharing without any restraint. He had the gift of divine vision even as a young boy. His father used to send him to bring flowers, Bael leaves and fruits for his daily worship. He often distributed the fruits to needy poor and would tell his father, he had already worshipped God in poor! Yogi Suddhananda Bharati, a boyhood friend of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji, recalled how Kuppuswami as a little lad, one day ran out with his plate of food when he heard a beggar's cry outside. He used to pity the poor

and feed the hungry at the door, make his father give a small coin to every beggar. Whenever he got sweetmeats from his mother, he distributed them liberally to his younger companions, poor, hungry and even to dogs, cats, cows, birds, himself not eating a bit though he loved sweets very much.

Kuppuswami studied at the Rajah's High School, Ettaiyapuram. He always topped the class and won the prizes every year. He was equally brilliant on the sportsfield as well. He used to practise fencing and gymnastics, getting up at 3 a.m. Though he was born in a very orthodox, highly respected Brahmin family at a time when strong caste prejudices and rigid untouchability prevailed in India, he showed the uncommon gift of equal vision and boldness in taking fencing lessons from an untouchable, and he even prostrated him every time and treated him with respect as Guru.

After completing matriculation in 1903 he joined the S.P.G. College, Tiruchirappalli. He had a sweet voice and wonderful memory and took part in debates and dramas and was a notable star of the college theatre, But he was forced to choose a professional course and joined the Medical school, Thanjavur. He was extremely industrious and never went home during the holidays and spent his time in the hospital trying to acquire more and more knowledge. He had a phenomenal memory and could retain whatever he read. He has said that even during his first year of medicine, he could answer the fifth year papers. He was first in all the subjects and was allowed free admission to operation theatre also.

Kuppuswami completed the medical course and earned the title M.B.C.M. The doctor started his medical practice in Tiruchi, while practising, he started in 1909 a medical journal Ambrosia, He observes:

"Ambrosia ran successfully for four years until I sailed for Malaya. It was a demi-quarto size, 32 pages each issue and beautifully got up. The material that its

contents presented to the reader was attractive and highly useful to medical practitioners. A significant spiritual touch could be felt in its pages.

"Unlike other medical journals, the entire outlook was based on the teachings of the yore, Spirituality was ingrained in me even in my youth."

He went to Madras to join Dr. Haller's Pharmacy. Soon after his father's death, he left India to go to Malaysia for better prospects.

Here are his experiences in Malaysia in his own words:

"I packed my things and did not forget to take a good quantity of sweets which my mother lovingly prepared for me. I belonged to an orthodox family and was afraid to take non-vegetarian food on board the ship. In my youth I liked sweet preparations immensely. Throughout the voyage, I managed to live on the sweets and drank plenty of water. As I was not accustomed to continued consumption of sweets only, I reached Singapore almost half dead! Strength of will and fiery determination helped a great deal in moulding my life and spiritual character.

"Dr. Parsons took me to Mr. A.G. Robins, manager of a rubber estate which had its own hospital. He asked me, 'Can you manage a hospital all by yourself?'

"I replied, 'Yes, I can manage even three hospitals!' I was appointed at once!

"I served the estate hospital near Seremban for nearly seven years, after which I joined the Johore Medical Office Ltd. I learnt the Malaya language and conversed with the natives in their own tongue. I served the workers of the estate nicely and endeared myself to them. I gained the esteem of the employer and the employee alike. I was always fond of service. One moment I would be in the hospital and the very next moment, in some poor patient's house to attend him and his family. Off and on, I would give my earnings to assist

friends and patients. I even went to the extent of pawning some of my valuables.

"In addition to my own work, I would visit other hospitals to acquire special knowledge. There was not a single available English medical book at that time that I had not read and digested.

"Soon I became well-known in Seremban and Johore Bahru. The bank manager would oblige me at any time, even on holidays, by honouring my cheques. I became everybody's friend through my social disposition and service. I got rapid promotions and with that my salary and private practice increased by leaps and bounds.

"All this was not earned in a single day. It meant very hard work, unflagging tenacity, effort and indomitable faith in the principles of goodness and virtue and their practical application in my daily life.

"I never demanded any fee from my clients. I felt happy when they were free from disease and trouble. To serve people and share what I have is my inborn nature.

"I used to cheer up people with my wit and humour and elevate the sick with loving and encouraging words. The sick at once felt a new health, hope, vigour and vitality. Everywhere people declared that I had a special gift from God for the miraculous cures effected in the patients and acclaimed me as a very kind and sympathetic doctor with charming and majestic personality.

"In serious cases, I kept vigil at night in the company of the sick. I understood their feeling and endeavoured to relieve their sufferings."

Once a poor man drenched to the skin, came to Dr. Kuppuswami at night. His wife was in birth pangs. The doctor went at once to her aid, and after attending her, stayed outside the hut in spite of heavy rain. Only after

the safe delivery of the child did the doctor return home next morning.

The two extremes of his nature have also been noted by him:

"I had a great liking for high class dress, collection of curios and fancy articles of gold, silver and sandalwood. Sometimes, I would purchase various kinds of gold rings and necklaces and wear them all at the same time. When I entered shops I never spent time in selection. I gathered all that I saw. I never liked haggling and bargaining. I paid the bills without scrutiny.

"I was as pure as a crystal and did my daily worship, prayers, study of scriptures. I would conduct Nandana Charitam (Hari Katha) and sing Bhajans and Kirtans. Even in Malaya I practised Anahata Laya Yoga and Swara Sadhana."

In spite of extremely busy life, the doctor was very regular in his daily worship, prayers and Yogasanas, as well as study of sacred scriptures like the Gita, the Bhagavatam, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and books of Sankaracharya, Swami Rama Tirth, Swami Vivekananda and the Imitation of Christ, the Bible and the literature of Theosophical Society. He always served Sadhus, Sannyasins and beggars. Once a Sadhu left behind on the doctor's table a much worn book, **Jiva-Brahma Aikya Vedanta Rahasyam** by Cuddapah Satchidananda Swami. The Vedantic book ignited dormant spirituality in the doctor in whom the process of Vichara and Viveka had already begun and brought Vairagya in him. He started reflecting more and more deeply. He observes:

"Is there not a higher mission in life than the daily round of official duties, eating and drinking? Is there no higher form of happiness than these transitory and illusory pleasures? How uncertain is life! How insecure is the existence on this earth-plane, with all kinds of diseases, anxieties, worries, fears and disappointments!

The world of names and forms is ever changing. Time is fleeting. All hopes of happiness in this world terminate in pain, despair and sorrow.

"Such were thoughts constantly rising in my mind. The doctor's profession provided me with ample evidence of the sufferings of this world. True, lasting happiness cannot be had merely in acquiring wealth. With the purification of heart through selfless service, I had a new vision. I was deeply convinced that there must be a place—a sweet home of pristine glory, purity and Divine splendour —where absolute security, perfect peace and lasting happiness can be had through Self-realisation.

"I frequently remembered the words of Srutis: 'The day on which one gets dispassion, that very day one should renounce the world.'

"So I gave up the life of ease, comfort and luxury and reached India in search of an ideal centre for purposes of prayer, meditation, study and a higher form of service to the world."

As days passed, he became more and more convinced about the futility of worldly life and inner craving for higher life became stronger and stronger. At last the day dawned when the doctor gave up his very lucrative practice and all his belongings in a state of total renunciation and came to India in 1922, to live a life of a penniless Sadhu.

After some pilgrimage he reached Rishikesh in the beginning of the year 1924. After staying for some months in Ramnagar, he went to Swargashram and selected a sequestered Kutir for intense penance. On June 1, 1924 when he was sitting on the banks of holy Ganga, a venerable saint Swami Vishwananda Saraswati was attracted by the spiritual aura of the young aspirant and gave him Sannyasa immediately. The Kailas Ashram Mahamandaleshwar Swami Vishnudevanandaji performed the ceremonies and gave him Vidhivat

Sannyasa Deeksha, and the name Swami Sivananda Saraswati.

Swami Vishwananda had given some instructions and guidance about Sannyasa Dharma but never met his disciple again. The young seeker plunged himself in very intense Sadhana all by himself. His personality, Sadhana and approach to spiritual matters were all unique. He imitated none. He lived a life of extreme austerity and simplicity in the tradition of ancient Rishis of India. He dressed to clothe himself, ate to live and lived to serve the humanity. He would go to Kshetra once a week only, bring the Rotis, dry them and ate them after soaking in Ganga water. He used to do Japa standing in waist-deep icy water of Ganga for hours before sunrise. He often spent more than twelve hours in daily meditation.

With all his intense Tapas Sri Swamiji did not neglect selfless service. He fetched water and brought Bhiksha from Kshetra for old and sick Sadhus and cleaned their huts. He gave medicines to the sick and even massaged their legs. He personally attended cholera and small-pox patients, when necessary, he kept vigil throughout the night by the side of ailing Sadhus. He once carried a sick Sadhu on his back to the hospital. From the money he received from his insurance policy, he started a charitable dispensary at Lakshman Jhula in 1927, to serve the Kedar-Badri Yatra pilgrims, Sadhus and poor. He saw God in every being and treated the sick with the sincerity of worshipping God.

Sri Swamiji was on one hand explaining the most intricate principles of Kevala Advaita Siddhanta (monism) in his lectures, on the other hand, he was doing Sankirtan in his sweet, melodious voice, full with love and used to shed tears or dance on the stage in moods of ecstasy, and earned the name of Sankirtan-Samrat.

After intense Tapas, severe austerity, deep study of scriptures, unparalleled selfless service of all the beings

and long hours of daily meditation for ten long years continuously, Swami Sivanandaji attained the supreme state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi and the Sadhaka emerged as a Siddha, the Sadhu as a saint, the man as godman.

His burning desire to help the entire humanity and his spirit of sharing whatever he had, found yet another direction. He started sharing his spiritual experience through his writings from 1927 onwards. In the beginning he wrote articles but his enthusiasm of helping others took the form of a continuous flow of Jnana-Ganga of more than three hundred books. It was his this spirit which was responsible for sowing the seeds of the Divine Life Society in 1936.

Sri Swamiji came to the right bank of Ganga in 1934 and occupied an old dilapidated and abandoned shed which was used to shelter cows and donkeys. Though he was unassuming, totally devoid of doership and attachment, and spent most of his time in seclusion and Sadhana, the greatness of this soul attracted an incessant flow of seeking souls around him and the Divine Life Society and the Sivananda Ashram grew up rapidly and became known world over.

The inhuman killing of the World War II moved him and in order to release a continuous stream of peace-current in the whole world, he started the Akhanda Mahamantra Kirtan round the clock, non-stop chanting of Mahamantra was commenced from 3-12-1943 and is still going on continuously.

Swami Sivanandaji organised the All-World Religions Federation on 28-12-1945 and founded the All-World Sadhus Federation on 19-2-1947. To give a systematic spiritual training and guidance to the seekers, the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy was established on 3-7-1948. In 1950 he undertook a lightning sixty-day All-India and Ceylon tour to deliver his divine message and for spiritual awakening of the

people. The World-Parliament of Religions was held at the Sivananda Ashram from 3rd to 5th April, 1953.

Sri Swamiji believed in synthesis and moderation. He gave the concept of Yoga of Synthesis and advocated simultaneous practice of Bhaktiyoga, Karmayoga, Rajayoga and Jnanayoga and advised the seeker to emphasise on any one of these to suit his attitude and level. He greatly emphasised the need for sound health and good body and was strictly against torturing or neglecting the body. He explicitly said and reiterated again and again that the purpose of human birth, the goal of life is God-realisation.

The great soul entered Mahasamadhi on 14-7-1963.

शिवानन्दयोगीन्द्रस्तुतिः

१. सदा पावनं जाह्नवीतीरवासं सदा स्वस्वरूपानुसंधानुशीलम् ।
सदा सुप्रसन्नं दयालुं भजेऽहं शिवानन्दयोगीन्द्रमानन्दमूर्तिम् ।।१ ।।

२. हरेर्दिव्यनाम स्वयं कीर्तयन्तं हरेः पादभक्तिं सदा बोधयन्तम् ।
हरेः पादपद्मस्थभृङ्गं भजेऽहंशिवानन्दयोगीन्द्रमानन्दमूर्तिम् ।।२ ।।

३. जराव्याधिदौर्बल्यसंपीडितानां सदाऽऽरोग्यदं यस्य कारुण्यनेत्रम् ।
भजेऽहं समस्तार्तसेवाधुरीणं शिवानन्दयोगीन्द्रमानन्दमूर्तिम् ।।३ ।।

४. सदा निर्विकल्पे स्थिरं यस्य चित्तं सदा कुम्भितः प्राणवायुर्निकामम्।
सदा योगनिष्ठं निरीहं भजेऽहं शिवानन्दयोगीन्द्रमानन्दमूर्तिम् ।।४।।

५. महामुद्रबन्धादियोगांगदक्षं सुषुम्नान्तरे चित्स्वरूपे निमग्नम् ।
महायोगनिद्राविलीनं भजेऽहं शिवानन्दयोगीन्द्रमानन्दमूर्तिम् ।।५।।

६. दयासागरं सर्वकल्याणराशिं सदा सच्चिदानन्दरूपे निलीनम् ।
सदाचारशीलं भजेऽहं भजेऽहं शिवानन्दयोगीन्द्रमानन्दमूर्तिम् ।।६ ।।

७. भवाम्भोधिनौकानिभं यस्य नेत्रं महामोहघोरान्धकारं हरन्तम् ।
भजेऽहं सदा तं महान्तं नितान्तं शिवानन्दयोगीन्द्रमानन्दमूर्तिम् ।।७ ।।

८. भजेऽहं जगत्कारणं सत्स्वरूपं भजेऽहं जगद्व्यापकं चित्स्वरूपम् ।
भजेऽहं निजानन्दमानन्दरूपं शिवानन्दयोगीन्द्रमानन्दमूर्तिम् ।।८ ।।

९. पठेद्यः सदा स्तोत्रमेतत् प्रभाते शिवानन्दयोगीन्द्रनाम्नि प्रणीतम् ।
भवेत्तस्यसंसारदुःखं विनष्टं तथा मोक्षसाम्राज्यकैवल्यलाभः।।९ ।।

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SWAMI SIVANANDA

SAINT, SAGE AND GODMAN

1

MANIFESTATION OF GOD

Siva is not an ordinary saint but a perfect Divine personality. Swami Sivananda is the most perfect manifestation of the Divine in our times. His one great aim has been to lead every human being to the Lord. His life has really been the tallest light-house which has been shedding its rays for all to see and follow the right path.

—Maj.-Gen. Dr. A.N. Sharma.

Swamiji is a chosen messenger of the Lord to smoothen the frightening angularities that have developed in the present-day world.

—Rai Sahib A.K. Sinha.

Radiant divinities! Beloved Immortal Atman! Sadhakas upon the path of spiritual Sadhana; seekers of the Eternal Reality; aspirants aspiring for spiritual Knowledge, Atma-jnana, the Supreme Wisdom that liberates one; Yogis engaged in the path of Yoga-Sadhana which pierces the veil of appearances,—the veil of Maya and which takes one beyond to attain the Reality; devotees of the Lord; lovers of righteousness; Satsangis assembled together in the final months of Gurudev's auspicious Birth Centenary!

Prostrations at the feet of the Lord and worshipful Gurudev. Bowing down my head at Their Feet and begging for Their Grace, I am commencing a Yajna based on a unique and incomparable concept of the Indian culture not found in any other culture or religion. That concept is: In this temporary ever-changing Prapancha, there are innumerable objects. They are momentary; their existence is merely a play of names and forms. This

temporary scene is like a drama. There is no ultimate Reality in them. Behind and beyond this Prapancha there is an eternal unchanging All-perfect imperishable Reality. It was, It is and It will always be ever present. It is all pervading Fullness. There is absolutely no change or incompleteness in it. It is without a beginning and an end. It is imperishable, indestructible. We can have some glimpse of it, through reflecting thought, contemplation and meditation.

A tree cannot exist without a seed, a bird without an egg. Likewise every phenomenon must have some ultimate cause. There cannot be any creation without a root cause. Reflect upon the infinite vastness of the universe,—the Sun, the moon, uncountable, innumerable heavenly bodies—planets, stars, solar systems, constellations, nebulae. Who can create them? Impossible for any human being. Why look so far away? Look at your own self, at your own body mechanism. It is indeed a most wonderful creation. If you think about the human body you will be stunned. A little reflection on what is happening inside you everyday, every moment, every split-second and you will be standing aghast at the wonder and marvel of what you are! What an intricate machine is your body! What a delicate and sensitive apparatus the mind and the central nervous system is! We have to accept that some Source which is the great Intelligence That alone could have created such an intricate machine as human body. Only a doctor who knows the inner mechanism thoroughly is the fittest person to appreciate the marvel that is the human mechanism. We do not know the inner mechanism. All that we know is our outer appearance as seen in the mirror. Inside the body there is a most wonderful incomparable, unimaginable mechanism operating day and night non-stop. The anabolism, catabolism, the metabolic process of building up of worn and torn tissues and the elimination of, casting out of the unnecessary debris,—if you think about all these things you will stand

aghast. Such things cannot be brought about by unintelligent principle. There must be some marvellous Cosmic Intelligence. If we reflect upon the vast limitless infinite Universe or upon our own body or upon the temporary perishable nature of all the objects that can be seen, though in reality it is merely a play of names and forms, we will be convinced that behind and beyond all these there must verily be some Tattva.

The sages who sought It with a resolve, 'I must know It, I must experience It,' dedicated their whole life in pursuit of the quest. Through intense penance, meditation, reflection, contemplation, discussion, enquiry, etc. they found deep within themselves the Illumination, the Knowledge, the inner Divine Wisdom and proclaimed: "It is. We have seen It. We have experienced It. What you people are seeing is only a shadow which has outward appearance but no ultimate reality, no solid reality. What you think to be real is just a temporary, momentary appearance. The One, which has no outward appearance and remains unseen is the solid Reality."

This is the great teaching of the seers. They have also proclaimed on the basis of their Experience. "We have pursued the quest persistently and have indulged in appropriate Sadhana, penance, continuously. Everyone of you can pursue It likewise. It is possible for everyone to experience It. God gives the strength and ability within you. You have the inherent ability for that. The tools for attaining Illumination and Liberation are inherent in every human being." This is the uniqueness of human beings as compared to all the rest of living creatures. The seers advise us, "You should be convinced that you have both the capacity and strength for the Attainment. Develop Viveka and Vichara. Reflect deeply: There must be a Reality behind this world and ourselves. Without That All-perfect, omniscient, omnipresent, supreme Power, supreme Knowledge, our existence is not possible. That Principle alone could have made

possible our existence and the existence of the entire Universe." By reasoning, reflecting and deep thinking like this, we may come to this conclusion or conviction. Also we have Sruti* Pramana,—the authentic declaration of those who have actually experienced That Great Reality. However both these are secondhand evidences. We have to take them on trust and faith. Sometimes, some descriptions of the Great Experience are recorded in the scriptures. These are known as Aptavakyas or reliable and authentic utterances. But one argues it is only a sruti**. A man is not satisfied by hearing about It, understanding Its nature. He wants a direct experience, he wants to see It himself. He enquires, 'How can I see It?' The mind cannot properly think about something which is without name, form, shape or any specific concrete quality or principle. This is the limitation of the mind imposed upon it by its finite nature, being bound up within the framework of time, space, etc. Its functioning is based only on the perception of the objects through the senses. So the mind always seeks concrete evidence. But the Experience is beyond mind, it can be conceived only through the eyes of Knowledge.

The Lord has told Arjuna all about the glories of His immanence in the Universe and His special Presence in the Universe and in the various categories of things in the Universe in Srimad Bhagavad-Gita Chapter X. He says, "This is how I am present everywhere in the Universe. In and through so many things you can know Me. Why dilate upon these things? Let me tell you, I pervade the entire Universe with an infinitesimal little portion of Myself. I tower above and beyond it in the Vastness of my true Being."

When Bhagavan said so, Arjuna was quite convinced. But when the next discourse starts what situation do you see? Like you and me, Arjuna says, "I

* *Sruti Something that is heard; the Vedas, the early scriptures coming from inner voice heard.*

** *sruti: hearsay.*

am able to understand this wonderful thing you have described. But I am seized with an irresistible longing to actually see, if possible, what You have told me just now that You are here, there, everywhere in the entire Universe. True. But is it possible for me to actually behold You being there? अश्वत्थः सर्ववृक्षाणाम्।—'Among all the trees (I am) the Pippal' (X-26). "Can I look at a Pippal tree and see You there?" स्रोतसामस्मि जाह्नवी।—'Among the streams I am the Ganga' (X-31). "Can I See You instead of flowing water?" When we see the snow peaks of the Himalaya we are much exhilarated. He says, स्थावराणां हिमालयः। 'Among the immovable I am Himalaya' (X-25). So Arjuna says, "Can I see You instead of the Himalayan peak and white snow?" He makes a very touching plea, "Is it possible for me to see You everywhere?" We should for ever be grateful to Arjuna for this request to Lord Krishna at the beginning of Chapter XI. It is this request of Arjuna which has given us a part of our legacy that we have inherited as our sublime cultural heritage, namely, the vision of the entire universe as a great, expanded manifestation of the unseen, invisible, transcendental Paratpara. Lord Krishna says, "No. It is not possible. Even the gods, the celestial themselves do not know It. It is a rare Experience. A very, very few had that Experience. वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः।–'(At the end of many births the wise man comes to Me), realising that all this is Vaasudeva (the innermost Self); such a great soul is very, very hard to find' (VII-19) He does not merely say, 'Durlabhah', but says 'Sudurlabhah.' Very, very difficult to come across such a great soul who has actually had this Experience. Everything indeed is that Being. He dwells in all the beings, all the things. सर्वभूतनिवासोऽसि वासुदेव नमोऽस्तु ते।—'O Lord Vaasudeva! Prostrations to Thee who is the abode of all the beings and objects' (Vishnu-sahasranama Stotram). That is experienced by a very few persons only.

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये।

यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः।।

'Among thousands of men some rare perchance strive for Perfection; even among those successful strivers only some rare one perchance knows Me in essence' (VII-3). So the Lord says, "It is not possible. But yet because, you are very dear to Me and a great friend of Mine, I will make a rare exception and give to you the spiritual vision, the divine sight. With your fleshy eyes you cannot behold It. It can be seen only through the eye of intuition. Then only you will be able to see the spiritual Truth, the Reality.

न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा।

दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम्।।

'But thou art not able to behold Me with these, thine gross eyes; I give thee the divine eye; with this thou behold My Lordly Yoga' (XI-8). We should also thank Lord Krishna for taking that attitude in order to give this great Experience to us. He was not thinking of Arjuna alone at that moment. Lord Krishna is a super Master in the art of pretence. He actually wanted to give all of us a glimpse of this great staggering and indescribable Vision, this Experience.

Ah! Arjuna is staggered! He looks, beholds. He cannot breathe. Waves after waves of ecstasy, thrill! Dumb-struck with wonderment, amazement! He never had such experience before. Wherever he sees, he sees only God. He sees only Divinity, tremendous Effulgence, Light. He sees that everything he thought was universe is nothing but diverse and manifold expressions, dynamic manifestations of that great Power, the Reality, the great Being. Being staggered and overcome by that Experience, he cannot do anything. He starts glorifying It and prostrates before It again and again.

नमो नमस्तेस्तु सहस्रकृत्वः पुनश्च भूयोऽपि नमो नमस्ते।।

नमः पुरस्तादथ पृष्ठतस्ते नमोऽस्तु ते सर्वत एव सर्व।।

'Obeisance to Thee a thousand times; again and again salutation, salutations unto Thee!' (XI-39). 'Salutations to thee from front and from behind, salutations to Thee from all sides, O Soul of all!' (XI-40). Arjuna is surrounded by this great Vision, great Presence; wherever he turns he sees only this great Effulgence, this overwhelming indescribable something! He breaks forth into a paean of praise, glorification. But after a while, certain aspects of It are awesome and suddenly the Vision gives rise to a fear. He starts trembling and says, "Enough! Enough! I cannot take It anymore, O Lord, enough!"

अदृष्टपूर्वं हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्ट्वा भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे।

तदेव मे दर्शय देवरूपं प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास।।

किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रहस्तमिच्छामि त्वां द्रष्टुमहं तथैव।

तेनैव रूपेण चतुर्भुजेन सहस्रबाहो भव विश्वमूर्ते।।

'I am delighted, having seen what was never seen before and yet my mind is distressed with fear. Show me that (previous) form only, O God! Have mercy, O God of gods! O Abode of the universe! I desire to see Thee as before, crowned, bearing mace, with the discus in hand, in Thy former form only, having four arms, O thousand-armed Cosmic Being!' (XI-45, 46)

Arjuna says: 'O Lord! You have shown this wondrous Form of Yours, never beheld by anyone before hitherto. Now I pray to Thee, please withdraw this terrible, indescribable Form, please withdraw It. Please appear to me once again as You were before this Form was projected on my vision, in Thy former Form having four arms.' This clearly indicates that at that time when Lord Krishna was the charioteer He was in the four-armed Form and not in the two-armed Form.

The point in saying this is, even though we may be able to grasp and be convinced through intellect, faith, mind and all that, even though we might have heard from those who may have experienced It, yet we have not actually beheld It, not actually experienced It. For the finite human mind, it will always be a far off abstruse concept upon which you will have to struggle to direct your mind and fix it. So later on artists tried to make statues, sculptures and paintings from the descriptions in Puranas. But these leave you with a sense of dissatisfaction that you have not seen It. The mind wants something concrete, something you can see, touch, talk to, something to which you can pray to, to which you can go for consolation, advice, guidance.

The Lord in order to fulfil this indispensable human need, manifests himself in human society within the course of human life, as certain perfect beings filled with His qualities of Divinity, Wisdom, Purity, Compassion, Kindness, Equal Vision, Joy, Peace. All these qualities keep radiating from such people. The moment you go near such a person, immediately you feel you are in a different realm. You forget this world, you forget everything. Your mind is filled with peace, joy. All your sorrows drop away from you for the time being. There is something in the presence of these divine beings that completely changes your vision, changes your consciousness, lifts you up from darkness, and everything becomes clear. You are lifted beyond yourself and you are in a different state of consciousness, even in a moment's presence of an illumined divine being.

They are living divinities in human form. They are Vibhutis. This term is used only to distinguish them and not to differentiate them from known recognised ten Avataras: Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Bhargava, Rama, Krishna, Buddha and Kalki, and the fourteen Upavataras: Narada, Kapila, Dattatreya, the four Kumaras (Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana, Sanatkumara), Hamsa, Sri Hari who gave Darshan to

Dhruva, Nara-Narayana, Rishabha, Hayagreeva, Sri Hari who liberated Gajendra, Indresh, Mohini, Dhanvantari, Vyasa. The Vibhutis are essentially human individuals but filled with the Divine Principle, Divine Lustre, the Divine Quality, so that in their presence we feel elevated. In the presence of a Vibhuti doubts like 'Does He exist or not?' does not linger on anymore; there is no unanswered question in his presence. His presence makes it absolutely certain for us that there is God. Why? If I can behold in this living individual such a perfection which I cannot find anywhere in the world in any individual, if such a perfection is possible in him who is also flesh and blood like me, then how can I doubt whether there is God? I have beheld my visible God here. If this visible God can manifest perfection, then there must certainly be a supreme Source of such beings.

It is unparalleled great good fortune of us, we who are born in this sacred land of Ganga and Himalaya that this hallowed land of our motherland and such godmen, such divine Vibhutis have been the order of the day. Such divine Vibhutis kept coming and created more such Vibhutis, just like a tree spreading its branches. Sankaracharya came, and he left behind four gems. In this way from ancient times, even beyond the known written history, this land has always been blessed with the advent and the presence of great Tattva-vettas, Brahmajnanis and godmen, divine beings filled with divine qualities. When we see their divine qualities, we say, 'There can be no doubt that there is God and He must be visible as they have beheld Him.'

We behold God in such perfect human beings out of conviction that God manifests from time to time into this world, besides and apart from the Avataras. He keeps on coming as all-perfect human individuals filled with His Divine qualities. They are the proofs that He exists as the Source. They move like ordinary people, but they are unmistakably divine. Thus He fulfils the deep need of the finite human mind to have some visible proof for us to see

and become convinced about His Existence. They have divine perfection, wonderful compassion, wonderful love, wonderful kindness, great purity, great peace, supreme Wisdom, everything. So these Vibhutis, these godmen are regarded as no other than God. The well known work Guru Gita is wholly devoted in praise of such Vibhutis.

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुर्गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः।
गुरुः साक्षात् परब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः।।

'Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu, Guru is God Mahesvara, Guru alone is verily the supreme Brahman. Therefore prostrations to him (the Guru)' (Sri Guru Gita, 58). Addressing the Guru the disciple says,

त्वं च विष्णुर्विरञ्चस्त्वं त्वं च देवो महेश्वरः।
त्वमेव शक्तिरूपाऽसि निर्गुणस्त्वं सनातनः।।

'Thou art Vishnu, Thou art the creator Brahma, Thou art the Lord Mahesvara. Thou art all the Cosmic Power Form and the eternal, attributeless, transcendental Reality' *(Dattatreyastotram in Narada Purana).*

Thou art the ancient One, the timeless One, the transcendental Reality beyond qualities, attributeless. Thou art the Cosmic Power—Parasakti, through which the One becomes manifested as many. Thou art the creator Brahma, the preserver Vishnu and the dissolver Mahesvara. Thou art everything.

In this Yajna, I have the supreme good fortune of saying something about a living god who came into our lives and by a mere glance of his eyes lifted us from doubts to certainty, from hesitation to resolution and determination, and gave us the strength and light. Guru Maharaj Swami Sivanandaji was a *'pratyaksha devata'*, a living god, *kankanda devatai* in Tamil, meaning God who has been actually seen.

2

THE INNER REVOLUTION

The doctor's profession gave me ample evidence of the sufferings of the world. I found concrete proof of the great saying, सर्वं दुःखं विवेकिनः। I was blessed with a new vision and perceptive. I was deeply convinced that there must be a place, a sweet home of pristine glory and purity and divine splendour where absolute security, perfect peace and happiness can be enjoyed eternally. In conformity with the dictum of the Sruti I renounced the world and felt that I belonged to the world. —*Swami Sivananda*

All of you know about the life of this great man Swami Sivanandaji. He was born in Pattamadai, a small little village in the southern end of Tamil Nadu, 24 kilometres south of the nearest railway station Tirunelveli. It is a small village by a beautiful river Tamraparni. This great man was born to mother Smt. Parvati Ammal and father Sri P.S. Vengu Iyer. Both were very pious believers in God and endowed with keen devotion, Bhakti and a staunch adherence to all the traditional ways of worshipping God. Sri Vengu Iyer was a devotee of Lord Siva. He used to worship the God daily in his house.

The son was given the name Kupppuswami. He was a very well developed gymnast. He was a brilliant student. Even from childhood he was a very compassionate person and would not allow any beggar to pass by without calling him and giving him some alms. He insisted on giving something to any poor person who asked for something. He would never hurt his father or mother.

He shone brilliantly as a student. After matriculation, he joined the Medical School in Thanjavur and became qualified for Medicine. He left at a very young age for the Federated States of Malaya and Singapore what is now known as Malaysia, in 1913.

As a doctor, जन्ममृत्यु जराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम्।—'perception of the evils of birth, death, old age, sickness and pain' (Gita XIII-8), it became a daily experience to him. He saw these daily and he developed Vairagya. So long you do not perceive these you think 'everything is nice and enjoyable. I must have this, I must have that,' and a wild goose chase of running after sense objects continue and you become frustrated and disappointed and afterwards contact diseases and become restless. No object satisfies one completely. Even after getting the objects one is dissatisfied. Only those whose eyes are opened will perceive the worldly things as Gurudev did, "All the things are coated with the varnish of death." He saw in them death only. Everything here is temporary and will perish.

The young doctor in Malaysia came in contact with human sufferings. In Gujarati, a patient is called Dardi and in Tamil Noyayi, both meaning one who has disease, one who is suffering. Perhaps, the English word Patient came because having all the pain and suffering, the patients patiently bear it and go to a doctor only if it is too much to bear it. Also nowadays, in a doctor's clinic they have to keep on waiting patiently. Someone asked a patient, "How long have you been sitting here?" "Well, I was clean-shaven when I came here but now I have a little growth of beard."

Coming into actual contact with suffering people with pain and sorrow and with old age and death, day after day, day after day, a discerning person like him with a spark of Viveka, Vichara and receptivity in him, gets Vairagya. In spite of compassionate efforts to save the patient he dies. The young doctor comes in actual

contact with the evils of birth, death, old age, sickness and pain. No one cares for you when you are old. He came in direct contact with life in the raw, life as it is and not as people imagine it to be when they have no experience. It is said that just before the French Revolution, when the people surrounded the palace shouting for bread during a drought year, the queen told her minister, "If they have no bread let them eat cake." She does not know the condition of the poor or about hunger and pain. But when a doctor works among poor people he actually sees their condition and the hard realities of life. He was a very sensitive person. The Samskaras of the past birth were there dormant. These Samskaras slowly began to get activated as he daily came in contact with pain, suffering, disease, bereavement, grief, poverty, death etc. So a day dawned when he said, 'Fie on this life! What is there in this life? How people can run after such a life? This is a hell on earth, this is the reality.' Such reflection turned him deeply inward. A sensitive person like him is easily susceptible to truths, discourses and teachings are not necessary.

Prince Siddhartha was a sensitive person. He saw only one old person that was enough for him. For two, three weeks he was upset brooding over that sight of the tottering old man. He said to his charioteer, "Chhanna! what is this creature moving on three legs?"

Chhanna: "My dear Prince! He is an old man walking with stick."

Siddhartha: "What do you mean by old person?"

Chhanna: "When a person lives for a long time gradually his body becomes weak and so he is unable to stand straight, unable to support his body."

Siddhartha: "Do all people become old like this?"

Chhanna: "Yes beloved Prince. All People."

Siddhartha: "I too?"

Chhanna: "Yes, one day you too."

Siddhartha: "I will also become like this?"

Chhanna: "Yes, one day all will have to become like this."

Siddhartha: "Enough Chhanna, turn the chariot. Take me back to the palace."

That one sight of something painful and hitherto not experienced by him was enough to make his mind deeply introvert and think, 'What is there in life if everyone has to become like that?' He looks at his youthful beautiful limbs and reflects, 'Will I too become like that?'

Everyone observes that the Prince is brooding. The King becomes concerned. He calls the minister and says, "Try to find out new ways of diverting the Prince's mind. Surround him with nice music, dance, drama, festivity." But after a month or so that too wears off and once again the curiosity to see the outside world catches hold of Siddhartha.

Siddhartha goes out a second time. He enjoys many things. He is all interested and excited. But after sometime he sees a sick man outside his hut, lying on a bed and groaning. The whole family have gathered around him. The daughter gives him something to drink, but he cannot drink it properly. All are concerned.

Siddhartha enquires: "Why all are looking very sad?"

Chhanna: "He is ill."

Siddhartha: "What is illness.?

Chhanna: "The body is afflicted with disease. He is suffering."

Siddhartha: "Oh! Disease and suffering! Does this affect all?"

Chhanna: "Everyone has to undergo suffering sometime or other."

Siddhartha: "Me too?"

Chhanna: "Yes, dear Prince!"

After much interval he sees the third sight. He sees bearers carrying a dead body to cemetery. All those who are following behind are weeping. The Prince is filled with compassion and enquires, "Why this person is so heartless? Why does he not get up and console these people who are weeping for him?"

Chhanna: "Beloved Prince! He cannot. He does not even know that they are weeping."

Siddhartha: "Why so?"

Chhanna: "Because he is dead."

Siddhartha: "Dead? What does it mean?"

Chhanna: "It is a condition where a person cannot hear, see, touch or move. He is like a log of wood."

Siddhartha "Oh! That means he cannot even sit up and console them! He cannot do anything, feel anything! Where are they taking him?"

Chhanna "They are taking him to cremation ground. They will put him on firewood and set fire."

Siddhartha "What do you mean! They will burn him!"

Chhanna "But he won't know. He is already dead. There is no life in the body. It is just like the firewood upon which they will put it."

This sight of dead body and weeping and wailing party created a deep impression on his mind. He is overcome by a strange feeling. He is unable to understand this.

On their way back in a remote area outside the residential area, under a tree in a park he sees a monk meditating. His face is radiating peace, serenity and joy which he had never seen on anyone's face. So he asks the charioteer to stop for a while and says, "Chhanna, look there. Who is that fellow whose face radiates so much peace and joy?" Chhanna says, "Beloved Prince! He is an all-renouncing monk. He has given up all the desires for

everything. He is a monk. He is in Nivritti Marga seeking the Eternal. He has given up all the desires. Hence this radiance, peace and serenity. It is the desire that brings about restlessness, agitation and all that."

Siddhartha: "Ah! So, that means even in this world filled with old age, pain, disease and death there is a possibility to attain such a state of absolute Serenity, absolute Peace, absolute Joy!"

Chhanna: "Yes, beloved Prince."

Siddhartha: "Who is a monk?"

Chhanna: "He who has renounced everything, who has given up all desires, who is not attached to anything."

Then and there the seed is sown. From deep within Siddhartha a voice reverberates, "I must become like him. That is the life. It is wonderful." From that time onwards the young prince is in deep thought. He is a different person now—no agitation, sadness or sorrow, nothing. He is in deep thought of a different kind. "That indeed is the life. Then alone one can find serenity. What radiance on the monk's face! He must have found a key to blessedness, the secret of going beyond sorrow and attaining Peace and Joy. That key I must also find. That secret I must also find. Not for myself. I must find and proclaim it to all the mankind. No more shall man experience sorrow in this universe. All must go beyond sorrow, and experience that supreme Peace. It is possible. I have seen it with my own eyes. I also must do the necessary effort and find out the secret, the key that takes one beyond sorrow and confers upon him peace and joy." Thus the inner revolution starts. He goes on thinking about it day and night. The culmination of it, all of you know.

Similar process went in Dr. Kuppuswami's mind. Slowly, slowly, day and night, he began to think, think, think, "I must no longer simply be a mute, helpless witness of the human suffering, pain, sorrow, sadness,

agony. No, no. I can no longer be a mute helpless witness. I must do penance and find out the great Light, I must find out the path to Illumination, Self-knowledge that takes one beyond death and rebirth." He had a Hindu background. His father was a devotee, so he must have heard a great deal about the scriptures and about great Rishis, Sadhana, Kaivalya, Liberation and all that. But in his youth he was such a lively, brilliant, outgoing personality. He had great enthusiasm for everything. He was full of interest in life. He was dynamic and liked meeting people and mixing with them. He was not an introvert. But when he came in living contact with death, pain, suffering, grief, sorrow, bereavement, these thoughts came up: 'I must renounce. This is what our ancient Rishis did. I must also practise Yoga and do meditation and penance.'

When he was in this state of mind, by a peculiar circumstances an old, much read, half-torn book came into his hands. It was in his own mother-tongue Tamil. Its name was Jiva-Brahma Aikya Vedanta Rahasyam written by Cuddapah Satchidananda Swami, a Yogi, Siddha and Jnani. The meaning of the title is: The secret of the identity of the individual soul with the supreme Soul. He found it on his table and he started reading it. This was the first Vedantic book he had read. He must have read other spiritual books on the lives of saints and compositions of Tamil saints. But it was this book which opened his eyes. He became more and more absorbed in studying this book and slowly an inner revolution started taking place in his mind. Day by day, he became more and more absorbed in the inner Reality and moved towards the highest Goal of the human life. It was just like Prince Siddhartha seeing the phenomenon of death and the phenomenon of non-attachment, desirelessness, renunciation, and Bliss, Peace and Effulgence. So he became deeply thoughtful. The same idea took possession of this young doctor.

He was a changed man now. When a patient came he would examine him and say, "Don't worry, you will soon be all right." He would give the patient a few hints on diet, etc., and then would take him inside the Pooja-room and give him a packet of Vibhuti of Siva-pooja (that is what once again, he started here in the Ashram) and make him sip Charanamrit three times and say, "I will pray for you. You will be all right." That was the ultimate phase of the once very flourishing, very serious, very brilliant medical career of Dr. Kuppuswami. It is during this time that the inner call came, a strong pull and the decision was taken. 'Now no more of this life. My life is Nivritti Marga, seclusion, silence, intense meditation, self-discipline, austerity, Titiksha, Tapasya.'

Sri Appaya Dikshitar, a very great sage, a man of Knowledge and Experience was his ancestor twenty-two generations back. Two or three generations before him also there was a Sannyasin in his family. His uncle Appaya Sivam was a great Sanskrit scholar and had written many philosophical books in Sanskrit. His father was such a Bhakta that he shed tears uttering Lord Siva's name. The magnet of Himalaya, Ganga and Uttarakhand draws all aspirants, seekers and Tyagis. This magnet drew Dr. Kuppuswami (he had Swami in his name then also) powerfully, unerringly. So a change came in the life of the doctor and his life in Malaysia came to an end. He came to Bharatavarsha and ultimately to Rishikesh to enter into a period of very deep, very serious, earnest Tapasya. If we have even one-tenth of his earnestness, his seriousness in Tapasya, Titiksha, Viveka, we all would have become Siddha Purushas, Mahapurushas.

He came to Himalaya seeking seclusion, silence, deep meditation. He got them all in the lap of Himalaya on the bank of Ganga. Lord Krishna has declared, 'I am present in this human world as Himalaya, as Ganga.' स्थावराणां हिमालयः and स्रोतसामस्मि जाह्नवी—'Among the immovable things, I am the Himalaya, among the

streams, I am Ganga' (Gita X-25, 31). His gratitude to these two entities which are the visible manifestations of God became objects of great veneration and deep love, so much so that when he gave his epistolary autobiography in eighteen letters he said, "Himalaya is my father and Ganga is my mother." Just as Adi-Sankaracharya has said:

माता मे पार्वती देवी पिता देवो महेश्वरः।
बान्धवाः शिवभक्ताश्च स्वदेशो भुवनत्रयम् ।।

'Goddess Parvati is my mother; Siva, the God of gods, is my father. All the devotees of Siva are my relatives and my country (or the Abode of the Self) is all the three realms.' Like that he felt that 'Himalaya and Ganga are my father and mother.' He had that loving relationship of a child towards Ganga Mata and Pita Himalaya. So he settled down here.

When he rose out of his ten years of intense deep Tapasya, meditation and prayers he was shining with Illumination, the inner Light. As a result of that great Event, he emerged from being Sadhaka and a Yogi, as a Yogarudha and a Siddha. The result of that is today's programme in this wonderful Samadhi Shrine, this big sacred holy Ashram and the vast family of those who have been greatly benefited by his teachings which have penetrated into every home and every human heart all over the world.

His life all of you know. I just gave you an esoteric glimpse of his inner state, because I wanted you to know what actually happened to him in Malaysia. He was a normal young man. He went there with all the ambitions of progressing in medical career and amassing a lot of wealth. All over the world, the doctors are in demand. They can make money easily. But that became a training ground for him to infuse in him Viveka, Vichara and Vairagya and a strong sense of disgust for the world so as to create in him aspiration. So, that stint in Malaysia was necessary. It prepared him for the higher spiritual life. It

prepared this young doctor from a life of Pravritti to the life of Nivritti. He gave up everything when the call came and became a man with mission. We must ever be grateful to the divine mother Ganga and the divine father Himalaya and the Swargashram Trust for nourishing and looking after him during his strenuous years of deep Sadhana, seclusion, silence, meditation, severe austerity.

All that we know about him is from our first-hand experience of his life in Rishikesh whereas his life as Dr. Kuppuswami remains a hearsay only. What we saw in him when he was here gives us some idea of how he might have been there. His Rishikesh life gives us a glimpse into the evolution, the unfoldment of his personality in the previous stage. That is what Gurudev was and Gurudev is. He is still is to us who had the fine fortune of actually seeing him, living with him and observing him living a wonderful divine life.

3

SEEDS OF VAIRAGYA

I spent all my energy and time in relieving human sufferings by serving the poor and sick, day and night, with a sympathetic heart. This kind of selfless service gave me purification of heart and mind and led me to the spiritual path.

—Swami Sivananda.

First comes Vichara, then comes Viveka. Through Vichara and Viveka flowers Vairagya. Vichara is stimulated by careful observations of life around us. We don't allow an event or an occurrence to pass without observing it carefully and reflecting over it, 'What is it that I am observing? What is its deeper meaning and significance? Does it hold any special lesson or an unspoken message for me?' Thus one becomes a thoughtful observer and not merely a passive onlooker; one becomes an active enquirer of what is being seen and one tries to find out the deeper significance from every little thing.

You can observe and learn something even from the behaviour of children. Suppose two children are left alone for a while and there happens to be only one toy. Soon they will quarrel, scream and cry. When the mothers come they find the stronger child holds the toy and has pushed away the other child enjoying the victory over the helpless child. This is the whole commentary on life. The behaviour of elderly people, communities, nations become epitomised in this small incident. If there were two toys, then also the stronger child may try to snatch away both the toys or he may want the same toy that the other one wants. What you find in the children, like that you find in the humanity also.

In this way little incidents become unspoken teachers for an enquirer who reflects upon the inner significance. The famous English poet William Shakespeare says,

> And this life 'exempt from public haunt'
> Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones and good in everything.
>
> —As You Like It. Act II scene (i)

A person with a vision and a poetic eye, as he goes on a lonely quiet walk in a forest, does not merely see the inert objects but he also finds sermons hidden in stones and whole books in babbling brooks.

Another poet Lord Tennyson finds inspiration from the ocean waves to go on ever, progressing forwards, upwards till the last breath.

> Men may come and men may go,
> But I go on for ever.
> I would never leave my march forwards.
> Dancing and circumventing with the waves,
> Till I cross the majestic ocean.
>
> I will march towards the mountain,
> Turning and twisting, leaping and falling,
> Overcoming the obstacles,
> I go on, and on, and on for ever.

The ancient writer, Vishnudev Sharma was watching from his window the lush green fields and a big tree which was standing in their midst. One day a storm set in; terrible, sweeping winds. Suddenly he heard a big shattering sound of the falling of the old tree. The strong big tree which was standing erect had broken. But the standing harvest and small grass bent, bowed down and gave way to the sweeping breeze and when the storm passed away, once again stood up straight, fully cheerful full of life. The thinker learns a lesson from this small incident: "A hurricane does not uproot the pliant grass that bends low before its fury, it snaps only proud lordly

trees" —Panchatantra. You can survive if you know when to yield leaving aside your pride. If one is obstinate and rigid on account of ego and does not bow down he meets the fate of the tree. That is what Zen also teaches us, that is also what Judo teaches us, 'Don't resist power with power but know how to yield and become unruffled.' The poet learns this profound lesson: By yielding one is able to overcome the fury of the blast whereas by becoming rigid one is uprooted.

In this way observation stimulates enquiry. Enquiry creates the ability to discriminate. Through discrimination one begins to see the difference between the mere passing appearances and the permanent changeless Reality. So comes Vairagya.

Gurudev had this faculty of keen observation well developed, because he was a medical man. A physician has to observe every little symptom, whether the patient tells it or not. Sometimes the doctor gathers the symptoms by mere observation. If the patient is fidget and restless, the doctor takes note of it and knows that the patient is a nervous type person, easily susceptible to outer occurrence. So a doctor must be a keen observer. In the olden days diagnosis depended on physical examination and observation only, as there were no laboratory facilities, X-rays, etc. They were able to find out by questioning and observing what a certain symptom meant, and immediately they tried to know the cause behind it. So the medical profession makes a person keenly observant and very subtle in detecting the hidden cause behind the apparent symptoms. The young doctor Kuppuswami of Malaysia was abundantly endowed with these innate qualities which when applied to the spiritual field became very valuable to him, became very helpful to his spiritual unfoldment, to his subtle ability to grasp the actual reality of things in this world.

4

PRACTICAL VEDANTIN

Siva is practical, subjective and direct. His preaching is based on personal experiences and the things that he has already realised; and for this very reason Siva attracts the masses of general readers.

—Prof. P.C. Mahendra, M.A. D.Lit.

Through a ceaseless output of Jnana Gurudev has made Jnana-Ganga to flow as a twin stream side by side with this Gangaji that comes from Gangotri in Himalaya. He made the Jnana-Ganga to start flowing from here and it spread all over India and brought about great awakening and he made innumerable flowers to bloom forth. The world is reaping the benefit of his penance, prayer and deep meditation, Samadhi and Illumination; reaping the benefit of his great Jnana-Yajna, the great prolific output of Wisdom and his ceaseless propagation in giving this wisdom to each and everyone. From the year 1934 to the year 1963, when he returned to the original Abode, his whole life was a life of ceaseless giving of spiritual knowledge, the message of devotion, worship, selfless service, Paropakara, selflessness, Sankirtan and Japa, the message of discipline, self-control, intense concentration, daily meditation, ceaseless discrimination between the eternal and the non-eternal, ceaseless enquiry, Vichara, Viveka and the pursuit of the Reality, which is hidden behind the veil of names and forms. He has brought to us through his message, the key to go beyond sorrow and enter into the realm of Joy, Peace and Serenity. He gave to the world the message of Yoga and Vedanta.

Gurudev was a practical Vedantin. Late revered Maj.-Gen. (Dr.) A.N. Sharma, the author of the book, Modern Saints and Mystics, has written a number of articles on Gurudev. They were compiled and brought out in the form of the book, Sri Swami Sivananda, The Sage of Practical Wisdom. Gen. Sharma was himself a practical man. He saw in Guru Maharaj an element of practicality and admired and appreciated it very much. Gurudev does not merely theorise and give us exposition of the scriptures and this Jnana and that Jnana. He tells us what to do, he shows us the practice that we have to engage in. That is the reason why the modern world needs him and his message the most. The modern man has no time to delve into vast scriptures, intricate hair-splitting logic and the subtle meanings and interpretations of the verses of the scriptures. No; he wants us to know what to do, what practice we should engage in, in everyday life for reaching nearer and nearer to the Goal.

Gurudev was practical to the nth degree. He left no stone unturned. His practical instructions started from telling you even at what time you should get up:

> Don't waste time after taking long bath. Wash your face quickly. Sit down for meditation. You should meditate immediately after getting up. Sit in Padmasana, Sukhasana, Swastikasana or Siddhasana, whichever is suitable to you and meditate. Take the Maala and do Japa. Next, practise some Asanas. Healthy body is necessary for Yoga. If the vehicle is not working properly you cannot advance on the path and reach the Destination. Practise Surya-namaskaras. If you have no time, three Asanas—Sirshasana, Sarvangasana and Paschimottanasana are enough.

He gave instructions about what you should eat and what you should not eat. These are in Twenty Important

Spiritual Instructions*. All of them are cent per cent practical.

•Fast on Ekadasi or live on milk and fruits only. •Speak the truth, speak little, speak sweetly. •Study the Gita, the Ramayana, the Bhagavatam systematically. •Get by heart some prayers, Slokas, Stotras. •Do charity regularly. If necessary forgo some wants. •Observe Mouna for a couple of hours daily. •Repeat any Mantra from 108 times to 21600 times daily.

He also gave us some specimen timetables as **Daily Routines****. Separate Daily Routines for (a) students, (b) retired people, (c) busy people, (d) whole time aspirants. All his instructions were practical.

Before you go to office, do marketing of vegetables etc. for 15-20 minutes. Otherwise she won't be able to prepare meals for you. After office hours play tennis or some game or take walk.

Gurudev has provided time for all these daily chores also, along with morning and evening Sadhana.

Gurudev has advised to take certain resolutions in order to launch into Sadhana. He made a separate proforma for this also as **Resolves for quick spiritual progress*****.

In The Universal Prayer****, Gurudev has given us a blue-print of a perfect life. Also, for people who cannot follow the Twenty Spiritual Instructions which are practical but rather difficult and find them tough, Gurudev has given a little easier version called **SADHANA TATTWA—The Science of Seven Cultures**

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* *See Appendix (iii)*
** *See Appendix (i)*
*** *See Appendix (ii)*
**** *See Appendix (v)*

for Quick Evolution of the Human Soul*. There are 32 paragraphs falling into seven sections. They are not difficult for an ordinary man, anyone can stick to them. The Twenty Spiritual Instructions are for those who are already on the path of Sadhana. The Science of Seven Cultures includes Health Culture, Energy Culture, Ethical Culture, Will Culture, Heart Culture, Psychic Culture and Spiritual Culture. In this way, the Master was a teacher of all the aspects of man. In spite of all these being practical, he knew about the difficulties and says,

> They are suitable for modern busy householders. Modify them to suit your convenience and increase the period gradually. In case of ill-health, pressure of work or unavoidable engagements, replace your active Sadhana by frequent remembrance of God.

Who can be more practical, more considerate, more kind in understanding human situations? Gurudev was ever a sharer and giver. He came with the idea, 'I must show people the way to go beyond sorrow.' He took care of all our sheaths, the Pancha-koshas** and the Sharira-trayas***. He brought out three hundred books for the welfare of people. His books are translated from English into all the vernacular languages. He gave a great treasure in the form of The Divine Life Society and this Sivananda Ashram. India has responded in a very grand manner to it and there are many hundred Branches of The Divine Life Society all over the country.

Gurudev presented his message of Divine Life in various forms: Small poems, songs, little sentences,

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* *See Appendix (iv)*

** *The five sheaths are (i) Annamaya, the body; (ii) Pranamaya, the five Pranas and the five organs; (iii) Manomaya, the mind and the five senses; (iv) Vijnanamaya, the intellect and the five senses; and (v) Anandamaya, the state of freedom from delusion.*

*** *The three bodies are gross, subtle and causal.*

huge essays and lectures (e.g. **Lectures on Yoga and Vedanta**). In the early days, he had time to go on writing long essays, as there was no Ashram, no disciples to eat away his time. When he started the Ashram, there was nothing here. So he had all the time for himself. But later on, as the Ashram grew and became bigger and bigger, he had less and less time. He stopped writing long essay type works and started writing small paragraphs of teachings; then little sentences only. At one time, he gave up that also as he became too busy, too pre-occupied with visitors. So he started writing small poems which went on becoming smaller and smaller, fourteen lines, ten lines, five lines. Many books of such poems have come up. Ultimately, he ended up in writing little, little sentences. **Elixir Divine** and **Voice of the Himalayas** are the examples.

This is an auspicious Yajna of focussing our mind on a great divine Vibhuti, the Yajna of trying to remember and once again recounting his teachings. Thus, this Yajna involves meditation on Gurudev in all those various aspects,—his life, his personality, his teachings.

Our culture believes in honouring the memory of the unbroken line of sages and seers who have kept the Light of God-realisation shining bright down millennia and brought it right down to us in the form of such persons like Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, Papa Ramdas, Sri Maa Anandamayee and others. We are grateful to all of them, starting from Dattatreya, Dakshinamurti, Hayagreeva, Vyasa and right up to our own Guru. We offer our homage and adorations to all of them.

PRACTISED BEFORE PREACHING

Swami Sivananda's preachings are all backed by his personal experience of practical Sadhana of the past twenty-five years of ascetic life.

—Sri Dwarka Nath Jhingan

His teachings are not based on mere academic knowledge or study of ancient and modern philosophies and religions, but have been carefully devised after personal practice of many years and intimate knowledge. They can easily be comprehended and translated into practice by any sincere aspirant.

—Sri D.C. Desai

Gurudev used to write addressing young aspirants:

You must be very correct, very punctual, very regular. You should discipline yourself rigidly. Otherwise, you cannot attain the highest, the Realisation. It is not an easy task. Happy-go-lucky type easy temperament is no good in spiritual pursuits. Have you noticed how correct, how strict, how disciplined are the soldiers in the army? They have to stand in the parade according to the unit or battalion they belong to. They have to be absolutely spick and span. They do polishing of the shoes and brass by themselves. Even if a single button is dull, the inspecting officer spots the soldier and puts him into quarter-guard, and he will have to do fettling duty. They are always fighting fit, trim and clean, neat and tidy, because they have been drilled into this sort of correctness, precision and training. When an ordinary soldier is required to be so

disciplined, so correct, so punctual, so regular, then what to say about you, O aspirant! A spiritual aspirant has to be even ten times more strict, regular, punctual, correct, well-disciplined. A soldier fights to win a battle, whereas an aspirant has to win the kingdom of heaven, win Kaivalya Moksha. Therefore, never give leniency to your mind.

When Gurudev said that, there was hundred per cent impact on the hearer. After hearing Gurudev, one could no longer remain what he was till then. Why? Because when Gurudev gave any instruction, one could clearly see he gave it with the firm conviction of his own practice. In fact, whatever Gurudev has said about Sadhana is based on his own experience only. He advised to the Sadhakas and disciples only such Sadhana which he himself had practised for such a long time that it had become his daily routine, his second nature. So it carried conviction, it carried a force behind it. The hearer immediately felt in his heart, 'Here is someone who is saying what he himself has gone through; he is not giving us some theoretical or bookish knowledge; he is giving a part of his own life, his own self.'

That was the power behind Gurudev's words. In spite of this fact, he seldom gave such straight, direct talk, rarely, very rarely, once in a while only. Gurudev used to say:

If anyone who is living in Sivananda Ashram complains of lack of guidance, he must be a lazy person, he has no interest in his own welfare. I have given everything necessary for a Sadhaka in my 300 books. If a Sadhaka is seriously interested in his own good, he should go through these books and he will have no more any doubts. He will never have any hesitation in proceeding with his Sadhana. Everything necessary for a spiritual aspirant is given

in these books. Study them. If you have got any doubts after a sincere study, do come to me and ask.

He was indeed hundred per cent right. If anyone with real interest takes the pains to go through the hard labour Gurudev has put into his writings, then there will be an absolutely clear path ahead of him. For every question, for every doubt, there is an answer in his books. He was indeed, *a man of practical wisdom.*

EARLY DAYS OF ASHRAM LIFE

Now his daily practice: Siva gets up at 3 a.m. and meditates for three hours...

He again meditates and retires at 11 p.m.

—Swami Krishnananda.

Just enough of food to survive, just enough of cloth to hide the shame and just enough of a habitation to shelter.

—Sri A.B.N. Sinha.

In the early forties Gurudev used to come to the upper side of the Ashram for an evening walk. It was a sight to see him coming up in the summer evenings. He loved to be on the banks of Gangaji. The breeze blowing over the waters is cool like an air-conditioner's breeze. After leaving the Kutir he used to come to the office first. It was at the present Post Office. He used to enter the office from the Ganga side, step in and sit in a small sofa immediately to the left hand side of the door. When I first came here in May 1943, there used to be only one person in the office, Brahmachari Poornabodh Chaitanya, belonging to the Avadhoot Parampara of Lord Dattatreya. He was not yet fully initiated*. He would always be in the office when Gurudev came. He was so short that if he stood by the side of Gurudev, he would perhaps come up to Gurudev's waist only. He was a jack of all the trades. He was the cashier and the typist as well.

The visitors had to sit on the floor. There would be a little table between them and Gurudev. There was a cloth

* *He entered Sannyasa on Sivaratri, in 1947 and became Swami Poornabodhendra.*

which covered the table and went down reaching the floor. Gurudev never allowed anyone to touch his feet. I have seen persistent Punjabi ladies put their hands inside the cloth and try to touch his feet. But Gurudev would retract his feet as far as possible.

In Rishikesh, the summer is terribly hot and the winter terribly cold. In the summer, Gurudev's morning office hours were 6.00 to 7.30 a.m., before it became hot. Before that he used to finish his bath in Gangaji and all other morning routine. He was a tall figure with a stick and a very thin borderless Dhoti and a small Muradabadi towel (Gamchha) to hold the Dhoti in place. He used to tie it on the Dhoti because he had a very rubbery type of body and belly. There would be another Gamchha on his shoulder. Like that only he used to come and sit in the office. Someone had to keep fanning him otherwise he would perspire profusely. Latest by 8.00 a.m. he used to go back to his Kutir. Now we wonder how he could live in that Kutir. By 9.00 a.m. one could not step out of it without sandals, because the Kutir veranda was a bare open cement platform open to sky without any roof or covering. If it rained, the platform became drenched and if there was sunshine, it became burning hot. His Sevak was living in the first room. So Gurudev would come down the steps, go round the platform and then enter his Kutir, go inside and close the door. Thereafter, no one, not even his Sevak could enter his Kutir until he would unbolt the door, open it and say O...m..., O...m... There was no bell even.

In the summer, he would come out again only after 5.30 p.m. in the evening. Then also it was blazing hot. There was no post office at that time, but there was only a branch post office, manned by a Swamiji. He was known as Dak-khanawale Swamiji. He would go to Rishikesh to bring the Dak (mail) and would hand over Gurudev's letters to his secretary. When I came here, his secretary

was Swami Krishnanandaji* and his mother-tongue was also the same as our Swami Krishnanandaji's mother-tongue. You can think of the volume of the mail. While the mail came at mid-day, Gurudev came to the office in the evening and saw the letters. The Swamiji brought the letters with the typed replies also and kept them before Gurudev. There was such a rapport between them and Gurudev that people could not distinguish their language from Gurudev's. Gurudev would go through them and if he wanted to add something, he would add a couple of lines with a green ink pen and all were posted the very next day. Very rarely have I seen him sending back a letter saying, 'Retype it' or 'Write like this,' very rarely.

After the office was over, he majestically climbed the hill. Three-fourth of present Ashram area was forest. There were many Bael trees and the remaining trees were all jungle trees. At that time, there was no way where we have big steps now; the only way was whence the car is now coming, in the form of a narrow jungle-footpath. So Gurudev used to come along the bank of mother Ganga, came past Ramashram Dharmasala and then there was a steep climb. The Devaprayag-Badrinath road went past Swami Akhilandeshwari Amma's room, Ganesh Kutir and it continued at that level right up to the Darshan Mahavidyalaya. After that it was very steep and inclined. Gurudev had to come via Ramashram Dharmasala, and then a very steep-climbing started. It was a zig-zag footpath up the hill. Gurudev always carried his stick. He used to go to the upper Ashram and inspect the progress of the construction work. In the previous year the Bhajan Hall had just been completed and the only other buildings that existed at that time were the four rooms of the Yoga Sadhana Kutir and the four rooms of the Press Building and two more rooms where Master

* *He hailed from coastal Karnataka and worked as the General Secretary, as well as, the editor of 'The Divine Life' till May 1944 when he left Ashram for seclusion.*

Satchidananda Maithaniji and Swami Suryadevanandaji are living. The rest was all jungle.

When the construction work of the Vishwanath Temple started, Gurudev used to come to see the progress and the only way for coming up was that very steep footpath. It was the war-time, so everything had to be obtained through permit only. Fortunately we had not much difficulty here. This area belonged to the Tehri-Garhwal Durbar and so we had to go to Narendra Nagar only.

When Gurudev came a little early and he had more time, he would go round and see the Temple construction and afterwards would do some exercise. The exercise was a little funny. You know there is a big bell outside the Bhajan Hall, which gives the hour-bell. He used to catch hold of that iron post and do some pull-ups. Then he would gently trot around the Bhajan Hall. After a few rounds of running he would walk around it. It was a delightful sight to see. In summer, there were mosquitoes and flies. So he used to shake that thin towel (Gamchha) to ward them off. He would never hurt even an insect. But at the same time, he could not afford to allow them to sit on his body and sting him. An elephant swings its trunk constantly and sometimes keeps a little branch of a tree in its trunk. Likewise Gurudev used to walk around majestically swinging along the thin towel.

After all that, Gurudev would come down and that was a wonderful sight to see. It would be semi-dark. One disciple would walk in front of him with a lantern. Gurudev would follow him majestically with his big stick.

In the winter, the platform outside the Kutir would become very cold. It was quite reverse of the summer. In the winter, Gurudev would come to the office at about 10.00 or 10.15 in the morning and he had to put on some warm clothing. He would come and sit in the office chatting with the people, sometimes till mid-day or 12.30 or even 1.00 in the noon. But the moment he entered his

Kutir, finished. No one had any access. Even though it was an open platform, no one dared to go there. In the evening he came out for a very brief period, for less than an hour only. In the winter, days are short, nights long, the sun sets early. He would come out at about 4.00 p.m. and sit for half an hour or sometimes even for an hour. He would then go to his Kutir or sometimes sat on the bank of mother Ganga on that platform. But even though he was sitting in the open, no one could go near him and disturb him at that time.

He came out for the third time for the evening Satsanga. He would come half an hour after the commencement of the Satsanga. When the opening Kirtan-Bhajan were over, he would come and take his seat. In those days, he sat completely straight and rigid, listening to whatever was going on. Something was read daily and he would listen to it carefully. He did only the concluding Kirtan towards the end of the Satsanga. He then met those who missed him in the morning and evening office hours. Thus the entire schedule changed according to the climate and the season of the year. Even his dress too changed according to the climate. In winter, sometimes, he wore a long-coat and occasionally even a turban.

7

BIOGRAPHIES OF GURUDEV

Swami Sivananda is undoubtedly a Divine Beacon whose light spreads far and wide for the spiritual uplift of humanity.

—Sri Swami Ramadas.

The story of Paramahamsa Sivanandaji's life is a study of religion in practice.

—Sri N.C. Ghosh.

Gurudev is regarded as personification of the Gita, an embodiment of the Gita by many people. They used to say, "If you want to see a real Sthitaprajna, go to Rishikesh and see Swami Sivanandaji."

Gurudev seldom spoke about himself. I know of only one occasion. One insistent young man, Sri Seturaman, succeeded in making Gurudev speak about himself. Gurudev yielded to his constant pressure because he had a soft corner for the young man. Gurudev had great regard for his Guru, Sri Venkataramani. He was a well-known man of literature from Tamil Nadu. He was a journalist and wrote many books of short stories, short novels, essays in English. His famous titles were: Paper-boats, Murugan—the Tiller, Kandan—the Patriot. In some ways he resembled Gurudev Sri Rabindra Nath Tagore. Both had equal ease in writing in English, as well as, in vernacular language. Gurudev Tagore had himself translated his Gitanjali and other Bengali books into English. But many of Gurudev Tagore's books were in verse, whereas Sri Venkataramani wrote only prose. Gurudev Tagore has also written one book called Sadhana.

Sri Seturaman was an understudy of Sri Venkataramani who was coaching him to write like him. Perhaps, that was one of the reasons for the sympathetic ties between Gurudev and the young man. Gurudev himself was in a similar position when he started his career. Sri Seturaman spoke fluent English and was a very good writer. When he was about seventeen years old, some problem arose and he left his mentor and came to Delhi and then to Rishikesh. He was a lean man and put on a white Dhoti only and always kept a white towel on his shoulder. He came in summer and stayed in the Ashram for about a year and half. Although he came from Madras and had never experienced cold before, throughout the winter also, his dress was the same and even persuasion of Gurudev could not make him wear anything more. A real Titikshu he was!

As he was an understudy of a journalist, he had that probing mind inborn within him. He was in the Ashram for about three or four months when he started pestering Gurudev with innumerable questions regarding Gurudev's Sadhana, his life and experiences in Malaysia, his early life in Pattamadai on the banks of Tamraparni, etc. By that time two biographies of Gurudev had already appeared. The first biography, **Swami Sivananda** was written by no less a personality than Swami Paramanandaji himself. The first edition was printed in Madras by Sri P.K. Vinayagam & Co. in My Magazine of India Press. The second enlarged edition with many illustrations was printed by Babu Kashiram Guptaji of General Printing works, Calcutta.

The second biography, **The Sage of Ananda Kutir** was written by Sri Dwarka Nath Jhingan, a Delhi advocate. He was a very dignified gentleman, a very serious man, a man of few words.

When Sri Seturamanji started pestering Gurudev with too many questions Gurudev asked him to read these two books. Prompt came the reply, "Swamiji! I have

read everything. But I want to know more." So ultimately, Gurudev suddenly decided to yield to his persistent, earnest request and agreed to give some information about himself and said 'All right! You come early in the morning at four o'clock. I will give you half an hour or so, you may ask your questions then.' So for the sake of that young man, Gurudev started coming to the Bhajan Hall in the early morning when it was completely dark. The Akhanda Mahamantra Kirtan* had not started yet.

After Gurudev sat all the doors and windows were closed. The young man would come with a pencil and note-book and start asking questions and Gurudev would give answers. His pre-monastic days were effaced from his mind, he had forgotten it. So sometimes, he had to think deeply and recollect and then only he could give answers. Once he caught the thread, no more questions were necessary and he would go on talking for half an hour. Whatever this young man noted down, he would make a fair copy the very same day and showed it to Gurudev. Thus Gurudev started speaking about himself and the third biography of Gurudev, Saint Sivananda came out.

* *The non-stop round-the-clock chanting of the Mahamantra, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rame Hare Hare, Hare Krishana Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare. commenced in Bhajan Hall on 3rd December 1943 and is going on continuously even today.*

8

SARVAM KHALVIDAM BRAHMA

ब्रह्मैवेदं विश्वमिदं वरिष्ठम्।—'This entire world is Supreme Being only' (Mundaka Up. II-2-11).

नारायण एवेदं सर्वम् ।—'All this is Narayana only' (Narayana Purva Up. V-6).

आत्मैवेदं सर्वमिति —'All this is only Atman' (Chhandogya Up. VII-25-2).

• There is One Self in all. All are manifestations of one God. • Realisation of oneness in all existences is the goal of human Life.

—Swami Sivananda.

Some of Gurudev's teachings and actions puzzled even the veteran Sannyasins and spiritual teachers of Rishikesh, Haridwar, etc. I have seen many prominent Mahatmas of Haridwar wanting to know about a peculiar behaviour of Gurudev. There was a very progressive type of Mahant called Mahant Sharadanandaji Maharaj of Sri Sravannath Jnana Mandir. He was an action-oriented Mahant, a social leader, an active worker of Rashtriya Seva Sangha in his pre-monastic life. He was chairman or head of so many institutions and was in fore-front of so many social and governmental functions.

He once asked Gurudev, "Swamiji! You belong to the Dasnamisannyasi Parampara of Sankaracharya*. A Sannyasi is a living god. He should bless the disciples and other people when they prostrate before him. Whereas, you are doing the contrary, you are doing

* *The lineage of one of the ten types of Sannyasins started by Sri Sankaracharya.*

prostrations to them. This is against our tradition. Kindly clarify your stand."

There was a Hindi-speaking Sannyasi who was in his pre-monastic life a journalist and an active worker of the Congress in Bihar. He tried to explain the Mahant that Gurudev's vision is different. But the Mahant insisted, "Well, that is all right. But I want some clarification from Swamiji himself."

Once he almost forcibly kidnapped Gurudev. He was one of the very few people who had a motorcar of his own. On one Vijaya-dasami day he came in his car. Coming up the hill was a very difficult task. The road was at least ten feet below the present road, and from there, there was a very narrow steep path. This very burly thick-set Mahant came up the hill panting and panting. Gurudev had just opened some exhibition and after that he was relaxing and talking and discussing about some items of the exhibition. The Mahant told Gurudev, "We have come here to take you with us." Gurudev said, "I won't come." The Mahant insisted saying, "This time I won't listen to any of your excuses. You must come and no excuses, please!" When Gurudev declined, the Mahant showed his firm determination saying, "I have brought my car. If necessary, we will physically lift you and put you into it." So Gurudev had to go and four of us went alongwith him.

The Mahant was building a huge Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya, a school of advanced learning. He had observed that many Sadhus and Sannyasins were not knowing Sanskrit and could not recite Gita and all that. So he wanted them to study Sanskrit and the scriptures. It was named Akhil Bharat Sadhu Mahavidyalaya. The building of the Mahavidyalaya was almost complete. So he told Gurudev, "The first ceremonial entry should be of your holy self, so that with your blessings the Mahavidayalaya would prosper." So in this way he made Gurudev to inaugurate it as Gurudev had no choice. The Mahant was a forceful personality. He also took Gurudev to the Shravannath Mandir in his Ashram. It is a

beautiful Sivalaya but a very few people know about it as it is on the inner road close to the Ganga-canal between Har-ki-pehri and Haridwar. The Ashram has a big Library, reading room and dispensary and all that.

Once again the Mahant asked Gurudev about his peculiar behaviour and insisted that he would know from Gurudev himself. Gurudev was cornered and so he started explaining:

"Well, Mahantji, it is true that I am a Sannyasi. But you know I am a Vedantin also. You have studied the Gita. You know what vision is given by Bhagavan Krishna about this world."

As the Mahant did not catch the point Gurudev clarified further:

"I am talking about the eleventh chapter. What is the ultimate Experience according to Vedanta? What is the supreme worship, what is the supreme Seva of the Lord according to Vedanta? सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म—'Verily all this is Brahman' (Chhandogya Upanishad III-14-i). Is Vedanta merely for chanting? There is only One Existence in all these names and forms. There is no duality, no multiplicity."

The Mahant did grasp Gurudev's vision from this brief exchange and he never raised this question again. This disciple was wondering about Gurudev's vision of the only One in all these names and forms. I also discovered that Gurudev knew enough Hindi to carry on even such philosophical conversation.

This was the way he taught us, not by telling but by doing. These few sentences exchanged by these two great Mahatmas was a world of teaching. This was an eye-opener to us. What was Gurudev's vision and approach towards life and all the beings and things in this universe! What was Gurudev's settled conviction!

That was the way Gurudev taught us and that method of teaching is unforgettable, it will never be forgotten.

There are pictures of Gurudev sitting flanked by four or eight disciples on either side. It was a pose only. Most of these ideas of photography were Swami Paramanandaji's ideas. He would say to Gurudev, "Swamiji! we want to have a Sankaracharya type photograph." "We want your photograph with a mace in hand." And in a hurry, an improvised mace was given in Gurudev's hand and he enjoyed it.

This was Gurudev's personality and this was his teaching. He also taught us that no matter what path you are following, you should not neglect your body. He used to do sit-ups and other exercises, he used to do those pull-ups, he would do a little of Bhastrika Pranayamas. He always said, "Never neglect your health. It is the foundation of all. For all the four Purusharthas, good health is indispensable. For achievement in any field of human endeavour, sound health is necessary. You should not neglect your physical body. Don't do foolish Tapasya and have a break-down in your health. Don't do extremes." Gurudev had gone to extremes, he had done such type of Tapasya and he had to suffer for it life-long. So if he saw any of us in our little bravado to go and stand waist-deep in the Ganga water and do Japa he would send his personal attendant saying, "Ask that man to come out. Does he want to do Tapasya or does he want to get lumbago and backache?"

Gurudev was an advocate of the middle path. He followed the Buddha's principle of moderation. Gurudev called his Yoga as "The Yoga of Synthesis,"—the name Integral Yoga came later on. He prescribed a synthesis of the Karma, Bhakti and Jnana Yoga.

This was Gurudev's personality. His life itself was his teaching,—the highest and the best teaching. His other teachings—writing, oral instruction and other things, become secondary.

9

THE EPISTOLARY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

He lives but to show others the path of God.

—A.B.N. Sinha.

It **(Sivananda Gita)** *is a narrative of soul's successful Self-perfection, of its victory over this illusion of earthly existence... The author's personality shows as mirrored in himself, a sort of terse analysis of the dynamics of Divine living.* —*Sri Sridhar Rao.*

Gurudev has written everything about his life and teachings in a big way as well as in a small way. **Autobiography of Swami Sivananda** is about his life in a big way and **Sivananda Gita**, an epistolary autobiography in a small way. There are eighteen lucid and inspiring handwritten letters each of it of only few lines. The letters are dated from January 1 to January 18.

He was a genius in brevity, a genius in packing up a world of matter within a few sentences only. He tells everything about himself from before he was born till the moment he was writing those letters in 1946. Several different types of editions of this book have come out. In one edition, there is a handwritten letter on one page and a picture corresponding to the main theme of the letter on the opposite page.

Another edition was with Swami (Prof.) Sadanandaji's commentary. There was a very learned highly intellectual scholar called Prof. K. Narayanaswami Iyer, Professor of History, Presidency College, Madras. He was also very erudite in philosophy and had written a masterly book in English, "History of Saiva Siddhanta, as

it exists in Tamil Nadu." It is rated as a very standard book. He was a most wonderful man like of whom I have rarely come across. He came under the influence of Gurudev's teachings and decided to come to the Ashram after retirement. He might have met Gurudev during his four-day stay in Madras during his All-India Tour in 1950. He was in correspondence with Gurudev. He had beautiful handwriting. Immediately after retirement he came to the Ashram, and stayed for six months and decided that it was possible for him to stay here. He asked Gurudev for the permission, "Swamiji! I have completed all my duties, fulfilled all my responsibilities except marriage of my daughter. Once her marriage is over, I am ready to embrace Sannyasa. May she and my wife come here and stay with me?" Gurudev said, "All right." So he went back and brought his wife and the daughter. After the daughter got married, he left his wife with some relative and promptly came back and took Sannyasa and then was known as Swami Sadananda.

When the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy was started in 1949 he was a regular lecturer. The classes were held everyday in the morning. He was a brilliant speaker and taught Raja Yoga.

He wrote a detailed commentary on Gurudev's letters. In this edition of **Sivananda Gita** each letter of Gurudev was followed by Swami Sadanandaji's commentary. It was so very telling, so very wonderfully expounded that a lady from Brussels, belonging to the Royal family of Belgium took permission from Gurudev and brought out a Deluxe Edition of this book, with beautiful golden cover. Later on she translated it into French also. She also translated and published the French edition of **Amrita Gita**. It is still available. Later on in 1956, Gurudev sent Swami Sadanandaji to Malaysia. He also compiled the elaborate volume on **The Philosophy and Teachings of Swami Sivananda**.

If you want to know about Gurudev's life and teachings, he himself has given it in written form, however there are some of his teachings which are very little known to the present-day people. In some cases of his earliest teachings one or two editions came out but afterwards they are not reprinted and so these books are not available now. When Gurudev's Diamond Jubilee was celebrated in 1947, some books were reprinted.

Guru Maharaj had started writing, I think from 1929, it was being serialised in My Magazine of India, an all-India magazine. It was a dirty, third rate magazine which was a weekly or a fortnightly. It was full of all types of matter and all types of advertisements. People would not like this magazine to go into children's hands. It was sold for two annas. The editor and proprietor Sri P.K. Vinayagam was a great devotee of Gurudev. He was the main person to organise Gurudev's visit to Madras in 1950 during the All-India Tour. He was so much struck with the force of Gurudev's teaching that he decided that every issue of that double column magazine will contain one full page of Gurudev's teachings under the heading, **Spiritual Lessons by Swami Sivananda, Ananda Kutir, Rishikesh.**

I first came across the magazine in 1932. At the bottom of the page below the line where footnotes are given, was printed, "If you wish to have more information on the subject you may write to the author at" and the address was given, "Please enclose stamps for reply." You can just imagine what a thrill of surprise it must have given to me. In the beginning I did not notice it, so my impression was that it was some Swami who is no more alive. Only after reading this I realised, 'Here is a Mahatma who is living in flesh and blood and is giving his teaching fresh.' So the idea of getting into contact with Gurudev came to me. But it was long many years afterwards that I actually wrote to him.

Sri P.K. Vinayagam brought out, **The Spiritual Lessons—Part I**, consisting the first five hundred lessons. I might be the person to purchase the first copy of that book. When they announced that these Lessons would be brought out in a book form at a later date, from that time onwards, I started going to the Magazine office inquiring when it will come out. They must have felt it strange, 'What a strange fellow, coming again and again and inquiring the same thing!' I was at that time in Form VI, that is Class X of the present day. The moment it came out, I purchased it paying half a rupee! There were five hundred teachings on good quality paper. It contains a note inside: "All rights of publication, stocking and distribution of this book, as well as other books of the Himalayan Yoga Series rest solely with Sri P.K. Vinayagam & Co., 31, Broadway, Madras. All communications and remittances on this account should be addressed directly to the above address. This note is in supersession of all the previous notices on the subject. P.K. Vinayagam & Co., 31, Broadway, Madras." They also published **The Spiritual Lessons—Part II** and also its revised second edition.

I think no personality was more written about in his own life time than Guru Maharaj Swami Sivanandaji. There must have been at least 60 biographies of Gurudev published during his own life time written by all types of different people like:

Title	**Author**
Swami Sivananda	Swami Paramananda
The Sage of Ananda Kutir	Sri Dwarka Nath Jhingan
Saint Sivananda	Sri Seturaman
Sivananda's Vision of Life	Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Shastriar
Sage of Practical Wisdom	Maj.-Gen. A.N. Sharma
Swami Sivananda, the Perfect Master	Swami Narayanananda
The Prophet of New age	Sri A.B.N. Sinha
Gurudev Swami Sivananda	Swami Venkatesananda
Sivananda Day-to-day	Swami Venkatesananda

Sivananda Day-to-day	Swami Gurusharanananda
Sivananda, My God	Swami Hridayananda
Sivananda Day-to-day	Swami Hridayananda
From Man to God-man	Sri N. Ananthanarayanan
Light Fountain	Swami Chidananda
Sivananda Regalia	Swami Chidananda

And also Biographies by Dr. Sushila Vighnay Mataji (in verse) and Sri Indrajit Sharmaji and many others.

So to speak about Gurudev's life amongst group like you, seems to be unnecessary. All of you are disciples, devotees or followers of Gurudev. You have been influenced, inspired and benefited by his teachings, you are following his teachings. So in some way or the other you are related to him, directly or indirectly. The beauty of Indian culture is to respect all the saints. You may be disciples of some other Guru, but when some eminent saint comes, you may go and visit that saint and pay respect and reverence to him. It will not in any way alter your loyalty to your own Guru. You attend the Satsanga of any noble saint. This is our tradition, our practice. So even if you are not a disciple of a saint, you may be his devotee. Even if you are not his devotee, you may be a Sadhaka reading his books and following his teachings and you may very much be benefited by merely being even followers. So, I am sure, you must have studied at least one or two biographies of Swami Sivanandaji.

10

DIE TO LIVE

What is Jiva? God plus I = Jiva.

What is Brahman? Jiva minus I = Brahman.

I am perfectly tolerant. I am patient. I can bear insult and injury. I am forgiving. I am free from vindictive nature. I return good for evil. I serve that man who has injured me, with joy.

—Swami Sivananda.

In **Bliss Divine** you can find a brief outline of Gurudev's teachings. You must have studied it. After all, a genuine and true disciple tries to live in accordance with the principles his Guru followed. So, a disciple must get some intimate glimpse of Guru's principles. Guru may not call him and specifically tell him the principles. So he should know, even if the Guru does not tell him, what are the lofty, sublime principles which are dear to Gurudev, what were the principles and ideals Gurudev was very strictly adhering to in his own life, what ideals he was very full of joy to speak about.

Some of the principles of Gurudev Swami Sivanandji are: Dhairya, Titiksha and Sahanasheelata, Sahishnuta, i.e., fortitude or patience, forbearance, endurance, tolerance. These are the qualities he liked so much that he practised them to the n^{th} degree and I specially admired that in him. Before I came here, I was an ardent worshipper of Sri Ramakrishna Dev Paramahamsa and Gurudev also knew it. I was very much under the influence of his life, teaching and the "*Gospel of Ramakrishna*" When he or mother Sharadadevi were talking to the devotees, they emphasised these qualities of endurance, patience, fortitude, forbearance, tolerance.

Sri Ramakrishna Dev used to give an example from the Bengali alphabet. There are three letters in the alphabet श (sh), ष (sh), स (s). The first one as in Sharir, Shankara, the second one as in Shanmukha, Shad-darshan, Shad-ripu and the third one as in Sant, Sadhu, Samadhi. In Marathi this little difference is very much emphasised and these letters are pronounced distinctly different. But in Bengali, they are pronounced more or less similarly like ष (Sh). Shri Ramakrishna Dev used to say, "Sh means *shahan karo* (forebear) and it is three times in the alphabet. So forbear, forebear and forbear." Keep on the Sadhana of forbearing again and again; that is for your good and uplift. Some people argue that if you go on forbearing again and again, the worldly people will crush you, consume you up. Don't worry. Remember always, you have to kill yourself, your 'I'. When they are doing this for you, they are in this way helping you.

You have to die to your little self, if you wish to have everlasting life in the Self, the Atman. The art and science of this killing of one's self is the most difficult one. The art of self-effacement, the art of total self-abnegation, the art of reducing yourself to nothingness—in that only you will be able to ascend into the Experience of Everythingness. Unless nothingness is achieved and established, when Everythingness knocks at your door, It will go away seeing 'no vacancy', seeing that the room is occupied. प्रेमकी गली अति सांकरी तामें दो न समाये ।—(The path of devotion is so narrow that there is no room for duality). If you want Him to be in, you have to cease to be. Sri Ramakrishna Dev used to quote a Bengali couplet. When translated into English it means 'When shall I be free?' 'I shall be free when I shall cease to be.' Here, the same wordings are used for the question as well as the answer. In Sanskrit there are many such tricky and very intelligent compositions. Where it would be a question if read in one way and an answer if read in another way: के दार पोषण रताः। "Who are capable of looking after the wife and children"? केदार पोषण रताः। Kedar means land or property. So now it

means, "A good property (owner) can look after his family." कं संजघान कृष्णः। "Whom did Lord Krishna kill?" कंसं जघान कृष्णः। "Lord Krishna killed Kamsa."

There is another well known example. Someone wanted to know who will be victorious in the war between the Greeks and the Romans. A partisan went to the oracle of Delphi and put this question. The answer came: *The Greeks the Romans shall conquer.* It may mean both the Greeks will conquer the Romans, as well as, the Greeks will be conquered by the Romans. The partisan returned no wiser, because the answer could be interpreted in both the ways.

Sri Ramakrishna Dev used to quote the Bengali saying which can be taken as a question as well as the answer. The question is "When shall I be free?" A disciple may be saying to his Guru, "What a terrible bondage this Samsara is! Enough of this Tapatraya! Gurudev, when shall I be free?" Guru replies, "When I shall cease to be.

What is the cause of your bondage? Your ego. You will become free when you will be able to erase your ego totally, when you will be able to efface your 'I'. You yourself are responsible for all your miseries, restlessness. It is all self-created. In God's creation, there is nothing but peace and bliss, everything is perfect. You have created the endless woes for yourself on account of your ego. This ego creates in you selfishness, anger, envy, jealousy and all the psychological torments.

Tapatraya means the three types of torments and sufferings—Adhyatmic, Adhidaivic and Adhibhautic. The word Adhyatmic is used here not in the spiritual sense. Spirituality immediately gives peace, bliss, happiness but never torments. The word 'atma' is used here in lesser sense meaning the lower self, the body. So the three types of torments are:

1) *Adhyatmic torments:* the torments related to the body e.g. the torments due to hunger, passion, desires.

2) *Adhidaivic torments:* the sufferings caused by the forces beyond our control e.g. due to fire, floods, famines, earthquake, epidemic.

3) *Adhibhautic torments:* the sufferings on account of other beings, creatures like dacoits, servant, virus.

Ego, selfishness and desires are mainly responsible for many of your Adhyatmic torments and make you agitated and restless. Ego is the root cause of other five enemies—lust, greed, hatred, anger and jealousy. These six enemies cause the Adhyatmic torments. The second and the third category of sufferings are not in our control. But we can certainly control the Adhyatmic torments, provided we train ourselves to do so. So in this sense the Guru says, "You shall be free when 'I' shall cease to be, when 'I' shall die." This is the key to become free.

Gurudev was very much fond of telling us again and again the story of Avanti Brahmin from Srimad-Bhagavata Mahapurana, Skanda XI. Lord Krishna in His parting message to his very dear friend Uddhava tells this story.

> The Brahmin of Avanti lost everything and became poor. His wife and family also turned against him (the same fate as that of King Suratha and Samadhi Vaishya in Devi-Mahatmya). But the Brahmin made up his mind not to budge from that place, no matter what happens to him, so he stayed in the same village. As he got into debts people started taunting him, jeering him, making fun of him. But he thought, 'I must observe silence, because if I open my mouth, I may become angry and use harsh words.' His silence provoked them even more and they started saying, <169>Look, he cannot speak, so he is an animal." They tied him to a tree like an animal and put some straw, hay and said, 'Eat, eat.' But even then he kept silence. He forbore everything.

Gurudev liked this quality, forbearance, very much. This is most repugnant to the Western psyche. They argue, "There must be some self-respect for the personality to grow. The personality should not be stifled. If you don't give any expression to your personality, it is a living death. This is almost like dying to your self. This is terrible." But all that is at psychological and social levels. Whereas we are talking here upon a Yogic and supra-metaphysical level. Even metaphysics is within the realm of finite sciences, it is an Apara-vidya. Whereas the spiritual Attainment, the Realisation is something beyond even speculative philosophy and metaphysics, it is Para-vidya. So Gurudev said, "The Western society would say, 'This is terrible, this is almost like death.' But an Eastern spiritual Guru would say, 'You are hundred per cent right. Yet this is desirable, because until you die to yourself, you cannot have the supreme, transcendental Experience, for which you have to die to yourself'."

This is the reason why Gurudev gave us a very puzzling, very terrible formula: BEAR INSULT, BEAR INJURY—HIGHEST SADHANA. I never tell this in the Western Countries. It may puzzle them. They may say, "Do you mean I have to reduce myself to a cipher? People will use me like a door-mat. It is impossible." In fact, if you are used like a door-mat, you will attain the doors of heaven.

A doubt may arise in you too, "Swamiji, how can this be the highest Sadhana? People will start taking undue advantage of me. In a modern society, it is not possible to bear insult and injury." My answer is, "My beloved friend, it is not meant for you, it is for the one who has become a cent per cent genuine Sadhaka and seeker, and who is struggling to efface oneself and finding it so terribly hard to efface this ego. You might have wiped it out twenty times, even then it will prop up again." Sri Ramakrishna Dev used to give an analogy of a particular tree. When a woodcutter cuts it down, it is no more there. But within

two days, there will be twenty small sprouts on the cut stump. Ego is like that. The analogy of ego is brought out very wonderfully in the personality of Raktabeeja in the Devi Mahatmya, Chapter VIII. If you try to kill him, hundreds of similar Raktabeejas will come up from the blood drops. You go on killing it and it will keep on coming up again.

What is this ego after all? Ego is nothing. It does not exist. If you deeply ponder the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi, you will find that there is no such thing as ego at all. Yet it seems to be everything. It is only you who have cropped your mind with this ego, though it really does not exist. If you reflect upon this, it will not be very difficult to blast and explode this ego. See intellectually through Vichara and Viveka, but we have no time to think. We are busily engaged in satisfying that ego, in doing whatever this ego wants us to do. We are at its command doing "Ji Huzoor" (Yes sir). We have no time to analyse who makes us run about like this. We have no time to take stock of ourselves. If you take a serious look at it, it will take to its heels. Sri Ramana Maharshi used to tell about an unwanted guest in a marriage party. The bride's party thought that he was from the groom's party and so treated him well with great respect. Similarly, the grooms's party treated him well thinking him to be from the bride's party. So he was having a very nice time. Once someone asked the other party how he is related to you and the secret was out and that fellow disappeared immediately.

The whole art and science of spiritual life is of dying to one's self, in every possible way, in minutest detail. There is a book called "The Cloud of Unknowing" written many hundred years back in fourteenth century by some anonymous western mystic. He very aptly tells us the way of dying to oneself, as it is a precondition for Divine Grace.

BEAR INJURY, BEAR INSULT, HIGHEST SADHANA. In this very puzzling and disturbing teaching Gurudev has given us the very heart of the spiritual process of transcending the self and emerging into the Experience of Cosmic Consciousness. If you ponder the true spiritual implication and the Yogic significance of this highest Sadhana of Gurudev, you will be able to understand that it reveals the entire secret of Yoga and Vedanta.

The scriptures say even right uptil Savikalpa Samadhi*, there still remains a faint trace of duality and therefore it is not the perfect Knowledge, it is not yet complete and the Liberation is still a little distance away. It is only in the Nirvikalpa Samadhi** one's ego sinks into oblivion never to be resurgent again. Until that, there is the consciousness of the Triputi (triplet): I, the knower (Jnata); the supreme Reality, the One to be known (Jneya); and the process of trying to know Brahman (Jnana). Only in the Nirvikalpa Samadhi there is the Triputilaya, the complete merging of the triplet.

Someone asked me yesterday how this occurs. The sages explain, it occurs stage by stage. First the Dhyata (meditator) merges into Dhyeya (the Target, the goal of meditation) and afterwards it merges into Nothingness. He further inquired, "What is this process?" I told him, "*Arey Baba!* When the Triputi-laya occurs, it is like the whole boat—the captain, the boat, the sailor and everything,—going down at the same moment. It is not like Salokya, Samipya, Saroopya, Sayujya***; it is not

* *Savikalpa Samadhi is a state in which the consciousness is established in the Jneya (the Object to be known), the All-pervading Brahman without dissolution of the Jnana (Knowledge) and the Jnata (knower).*

** *In Nirvikalpa Samadhi the Jnata becomes one with the Jneya. It is also known as Yoga. Like the salt becoming one with the water the consciousness merges into the Brahman and only One illuminates.*

*** *There are four types of Liberation: (i) Salokya: To get an entry into His regime as a resident; (ii) Samipya: To be near to Him as*

such step by step the Liberation or Kramamukti. In the ultimate, it is the leap of the Charisma of the Reality. Savikalpa Samadhi is not an ordinary state. It is a very high state where it is known that the world is Mithya; but yet it is a state of awareness of oneself as a meditator or a seeker seeking the Reality. It is the highest state of relative consciousness. It is the most purified, refined and the subtlest state. However, as long as you are still in the Savikalpa Samadhi state, there remains the relative consciousness. Whereas in the Nirvikalpa Samadhi state the ultimate Reality is absolute, It is Kevala Brahma Tattva. It is the Experience of absolute Bliss, unbounded by the time-space dimensions. It is All-pervading One. As there is the Triputilaya, there is no awareness of one's self. The process is something that cannot be described. The Charisma of the Reality comes to the precipice of this side. There is a wide dividing, yawning abyss and with one leap, one is one with the One. It is not a slow process. If it were a slow process, you would find yourself at the bottom of the abyss and there would be the end of you. So they call it the leap from the relative to the Absolute Consciousness. There is no process or step by step going up.

Bear Insult, Bear Injury—Highest Sadhana. How this highest Sadhana is done, is summed up by Gurudev. This comes through continuous practice. In big temples, huge quantity of sandal-paste is to be prepared for the worship of the deity. In South India there is the practice of completely covering the entire Deity from head to toes with the covering of sandal-paste. You cannot see the deity, you see only the sandal-paste covering. If it is a big deity (idol), you require so much of sandal-paste that there will be a huge grinding stone and a big block of sandal-wood and sometimes two people sit to reduce the sandal-wood into paste. In course of time, the big

His assistant, servant; (iii) Saroopya: To become His follower and inherit all His characteristics and become similar to Him; and (iv) Sayujya: The complete merger with Him.

sandal-wood block goes on diminishing, diminishing, diminishing. . . It becomes so small that you cannot hold it with two hands. So you start rubbing it with one hand only. When there is no place to hold it in your hand, you rub it with your fingers to turn into nothingness. In the same way the process of this 'I' being gradually grounded, grounded, grounded. and erased and erased. . . and ultimately reducing to nothingness is to be persisted continuously for a very long time, it is a lifelong process. This Sadhana is of great importance because the whole of Sadhana is to emerge into God-consciousness, but as long as you hold on to your I-consciousness, you cannot attain God-consciousness. I-consciousness is your Prapancha, I-consciousness is your bondage, I-consciousness is the net in which you are caught and it makes you weeping, wailing and suffering. It is your prison-house. It is the cage in which the Jivatma bird is imprisoned. Therefore, you cannot easily succeed in erasing this I-consciousness fully. It is a long drawn process and you have to go on practising it every day of your life, every moment of your life, in every situation of life, in all the circumstances.

It is not something like imagining, 'I will burn up my ego in Yogagni (the fire of Yoga).' It is merely a very nice, beautiful, fanciful imagination. But this Yogagni is not present all the twenty-four hours. In a whole day, you may try to generate it for an hour or two. In the rest of the time the hunger and thirst of the body may drag you down. You have to engage yourself in normal physical dealing at the outer gross plane for greater part of your working period. When Sadhana is not continued in this period, whatever is achieved in your meditation will be finished. Everyday you will go on supporting your ego, quarreling for it, getting angry for it. . . There you are. In one part you are trying to go beyond it and in another part you don't want to lose it. See this is the play of Maya! It goes on in the life of a Sadhaka. So Gurudev's advice of Bear insult, Bear injury is meant for the Sadhaka who

has realised that the death of ego is the one and the only one way of attaining Immortality and eternal Bliss. If you want That, this is the price you have to pay for It.

I conclude by giving you two small illustrations. One of Gurudev's earliest records is:

Within you is hidden God
Within you is Immortal Soul
Kill this little 'I',
Die to live,
Lead the Divine life.
Within you is the Fountain of Joy!
Within you is the Ocean of Bliss!

Everything you want is within you. But then what makes you unable to experience It? Yourself! You are your greatest obstacle! You are your greatest enemy! So, kill this little 'I'. Die to live. Lead the Divine Life. What is Divine life? Divine life is dying to your little self and inviting God to come and take that vacated seat.

There is a Biblical teaching. One who maintains the ego, loses the everlasting bliss. So one who wants to maintain the ego, will lose that everlasting bliss. He will have to come again and again as Sankaracharaya describes पुनरपि जननं पुनरपि मरणं पुनरपि जननीजठरे शयनम् —'Again birth, again death and again lying in the womb of mother' (Bhajagovindam-21). This wheel of birth and death will always be whirling him round and round. But he who is prepared to die, goes beyond death,—he becomes liberated. He who is willing to lose his self, gains It. In this sense Gurudev says, *Die to Live. Lead the Divine Life.*

Many mystics have tried to explain this upward ascent into the ultimate Cosmic Consciousness, God-experience and Liberation in stages. Even in Vedanta, there is the description of Sapta-Jnana-Bhoomika:

ज्ञानभूमिः शुभेच्छा स्यात्प्रथमा समुदीरिता।
विचारणा द्वीतीया तु तृतीया तनुमानसा।।
सत्त्वापत्तिश्चतुर्थी स्यात्ततोऽसंसक्तिनामिका।
पदार्थभावना षष्ठी सप्तमी तुर्यगा स्मृता।।

'Shubhechha is the first stage of knowledge, Vicharana the second, Tanumanasa (or Asangabhavana) the third, Sattvapatti the fourth, Asamsakti the fifth, Padarthabhavana the sixth and Turiya the seventh (Sri Sankaracharya's *Sarvavedanta-SiddhantaSara-sangraha*—939, 940.) These are the seven stages of attaining wisdom.

A Western mystic R. Brook also describes the seven stages of heavenly blessedness. This is put in somewhat analogical language of John Banyan's "The Pilgrim's Progress." Sufi Saint Farid Ud-din Attar has also described the progress of the seeking soul in his Manteq at-Tair, pilgrimage to the ultimate shrine of God-experience, God-consciousness and becoming one with god. The Jivatma proceeds through various valleys, hills and dales. They describe the details of these valleys or stages namely Search, Love, Mystic apprehension, Detachment, Unity, Wonderment and Fana or Fulfilment in annihilation*. Jivatma has to pass through these stages one after another. Fana means death. In the fourth valley the Jivatma is stripped off all the earthly things, as long as you cling to your worldly life, you are far from experiencing the true life. When you decide to take this courageous step of dying to your lower self, then only you start living and you can rise above the time-space dimensions, names and forms appearances, action-causation and their fruits, and all these finite existences. There is a saying among Sufis, *'Zindagi hai fana'*, (true) life is death. *Zindagi is fana* is not used in a lesser meaning.

* *The pilgrim-birds eventually discover the perfect King Simurgh is none other than themselves, transformed;—a striking resemblance with Vedanta Darshan.*

Of course, the lesser meaning is also valid. From the moment the child is born from its mother's womb and starts breathing the worldly atmosphere, the life is, biologically or physically speaking, a steady movement towards the death. When you celebrate the birthday, one year is finished, one year less to live. So, life is a steady march towards the funeral, the heart-beats are like a muffled drum in our continuous march towards the cemetery.

However, what the Sufis mean by *Zindagi hai fana* is in its higher sense, in the spiritual sense. It is dying to the little self. Gurudev always used to emphasise again and again, and he was never tired of stressing and reiterating, "*You have to efface your ego.*" Therefore, any occasion to bear, to endure, to tolerate, to be patient and not to retaliate is a God-sent opportunity for you to erase a little bit of this ego. So these two sentences of Gurudev's teachings: *Bear insult, bear injury, it is the highest Sadhana*,—have a very, very high significance and meaning. In his own life he demonstrated this by absolutely reducing himself to a cipher. He lived a veritable life of philosophy.

Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare,
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare.

Jagat kalpana, jiva kalpana, sab hi kalpana, deergha sapna.
Nothing exists, nothing belongs to me
I am neither mind, nor this body,
Immortal self am I,
Serve, love, give, purify, meditate, realise,
Be good, do good, Be kind, be compassionate.

This is Gurudev's life. This is Gurudev's teaching also.

Enquire—'Who am I?' Know thyself and be free,
Enquire—'Who am I?' know thyself and be free.
You are not this body, you are not this impure mind,
You are the essence of eternal Divinity.

Some people do not like to admit that the mind is impure. They argue, "You are giving negative suggestion." But the very fact that you cannot tolerate the real situation indicates that the mind is impure. There is that ego.

Bhagavatpada Jagadguru Sankaracharya, the well known propounder, pioneer of the Kevala Advaita Siddhanta has said that the purity of the mind is the door-step to enter Vedanta. One cannot become a true Vedantin without the purity of the mind. He says there are three types of obstacles which hold Jiva in bondage, namely, Mala, Vikshepa, Avarana, that is, the impurities of the mind, the outgoing tendency of the Chitta and the veil of ignorance which covers the Atma or Brahman.

The impurities of the mind are thirteen of which the main six are known as the six enemies: desire or passion, anger, greed, infatuated delusion, arrogance, envy. And the remaining are attachment, hatred, jealousy, malice, hypocrisy, vanity, egoism. We should be fully aware that so long as these and so many other impurities exist, the mind does not become pure, and without purity of the mind there can be no Illumination and without Illumination there can be no Liberation or Salvation. So purity of the mind is of paramount importance.

The purity of the mind can best be attained by selfless service, totally free from selfish motives, expectation of gains or fruits from it and the ego of doership. You should always say, 'I am grateful to you for the good fortune of serving you.' And you should feel, 'I am the servant of the servants.' You should say, 'O Gurudev, I am dust at your Feet.' The mystics of the bygone era used to say, 'O Lord! Make me worthy enough so that sandals prepared from my skin are used by saints and sages. It will be my greatest good fortune!' So, you should not have even least repugnance in doing any type of Seva,—sweeping, cleaning the floor, cleaning the

patients. It is necessary to do utmost Seva selflessly for the effacement of the ego. So Gurudev says,

Give up Brahmin, Sannyasa Abhiman.
Crush this professor, engineer Abhiman.
Kill this doctor, collector Abhiman.
Abhiman Tyago, Seva Karo.

Efface your ego completely by selfless service. Only when the ego is totally removed, you will be able to plunge into devotion, and you will not feel shy of chanting God's Name and dance. So, for Bhakti Yoga also it is most essential to efface completely your ego.

Purna Purushottam Bhagavan Sri Krishna Himself demonstrated to what extent one may go by becoming the one-man reception committee of the Rajasuya Yajna of Yudhishthira and received all the saints and sages, made them to sit on decorated seats honourably, and then washed their feet Himself. Also, He chose to become the charioteer of Arjuna during the Mahabharata War and He must have done the work to the last degree by taking the horses to the waterfront and washing them, taking them to the stable, feeding them, etc., daily.

Similarly, Lord Jesus has also shown the way for the absolute effacement of the ego. He washed the feet of all His twelve disciples, in spite of their protest, and dried them with a towel wherewith He was girded. He thus showed before His departure that the highest Sadhana is absolute effacement of the ego giving up all the sense of superiority. When James and John joined Jesus, He said, "Whosoever will be greatest amongst you shall be servant of all" (New Testament, St. Mark 10). He gave this unforgettable lesson to give them the ultimate essence of Sadhana.

Gurudev repeatedly emphasised that complete effacement of the ego is the inner secret of Sadhana and purification of the mind. After Chittashuddhi, total purification of the interior, there arises devotion to God and now you can properly do the Upasana and indulge

yourself in Bhakti Marga. Gradually, day after day, the Vikshepa Sakti of the Chitta starts receding. When it goes away completely the Avarana, the Ajnana which covers the inner Reality can be removed and the state of Illumination can be attained. So Gurudev says,

You are not this body.
You are not this restless mind,
You are the essence of Immortality.
Realise this and be free.
This is your duty, your foremost duty,
Therefore do it now, do not postpone.

11

ABSOLUTELY EGOLESS

God is always with you. He will protect and deliver you. Take refuge in Him. Surrender everything unto Him. Place your ego at His feet and be at ease. He will remove all defects and weaknesses. His blessings will overflow into your life and transform your mind and body.

—Swami Sivananda.

We were considering Gurudev's highest Sadhana—patience, fortitude, forbearance, endurance, tolerance, bear insult too. Guru Maharaj was telling again and again the story of the Avanti Brahmin from the Krishna-Uddhava dialogue in the Mahabharata. He was telling us that we should be like that Avanti Brahmin. Whether it is the Kevala Advaita Siddhanta or the Dvaita-vada Siddhanta, all maintain that the Supreme Reality is attained only after completely effacing the ego, making yourself a cipher. So long as there remains a slightest trace of ego, you cannot attain It. Even though the two paths are different, both are asserting the same principles.

Most worshipful, most revered Swami Madhavanandaji Maharaj, the Vice-president, is citing one Sloka of Bhagavan Vyasa in this regard. Two words indicate bondage: अहम्, मम (I and mine). What is the fix in which the Jivatma finds itself? I-ness and mine-ness—they indicate bondage, they indicate Samsara, they indicate Tapatraya, they indicate all the suffering of the individual soul.

Two words indicate liberation नाऽहम्, न मम (not I, not mine). When there is absolute absence of a separatist ego

sense, no desire to show it up and keep it supported, when there is no feeling of this is mine, then you are liberated.

This is the quintessence of Vedantic teaching. It asserts that the individual ego is the problem. It needs solution. The solution is dissolution of the ego. There is no other solution. The ego has to go.

Psychologically speaking, an individual is an individual because he has got an individuality. Otherwise he will be like a line drawn on water surface with a stick. He will soon perish. Unless the individual feels the sense of 'I', he cannot survive. If he is hungry and does not feel "I am hungry, I want food" he will starve and die. So the survival necessitates the presence of the existence of a separate individualistic awareness of one's self as a being apart from other beings. Psychologically, the survival instinct manifests itself as the separatist ego-consciousness.

This explains why it is there. It is necessary for survival. It is a first basic manifestation of consciousness. It is the first awareness. After a deep sleep when you wake up, the first awareness is 'I am awake'. You may not say so, but that is the anatomy of consciousness at the moment of waking. It is a basic state of the mind.

The ethical aspect of ego comes into play in accordance with the Guna with which this 'I' associates itself or allows itself to be dominated by. If this I associates itself with Sattvaguna, it becomes a very, very valuable asset to the society, to the individual. All the aspects of the Sattvic individual's dealings result in all that is good and positive, constructive and beautiful, auspicious and blessed.

If the ego allows itself to be dominated by Rajoguna, it becomes a centre of agitation, disturbance and disharmony and keeps the person constantly in a state of restlessness. He will have no peace and cannot give

peace to others. But if it has the basis of Sattva, and is channelised in the direction directed by Sattva, this Rajasic active principle becomes productive of something that is positive, beneficial and good. Gurudev's activities were like that. There was a Rajas which communicated to others. He himself did not do much activity, but he was able to keep thirty to forty persons active even for twelve hours a day. With two or three sentences he gave enough burden of work to people to keep them busy for that day or even for the whole week. It is just like the rising of the Sun. It does not do anything, neither does it shout nor does it give any commands like a captain on the parade ground. But the very fact of its rising makes the whole world plunged into activity and dynamism. That is the way in which the divine personalities work. In persons with God-consciousness, Divine-consciousness, the same disturbing factor Rajas becomes redeemed due to the basis of Sattva.

If the basis of Rajas is Tamas, wherever that person goes he starts some unrest, some agitation. He does not allow others to be in peace. He causes people to become tense; when he goes people heave a sigh of relief.

If the ego principle is associated with Tamoguna. it becomes a real problem to the individual, his family, his neighbours and the society. He is a nuisance to the whole world because that ego asserts itself as greed, anger, dominating aggressiveness, destructiveness, harassment to others, tormenting others. All the Asuras had these negative qualities. Their ego was completely dominated by Tamoguna resulting in lethargy and sleep, hatred and anger, passion and greed. Wherever such a person goes, he brings about unhappiness, chaos, destruction, downfall.

In Srimad Bhagavad-Gita, the whole of Chapter XVI, "The Yoga of the Division of the Three Gunas" is on this.

So ego by itself is amoral or neutral with respect to morals, ethical values. It is neither good nor bad. It is

there. Upon the ethical plane ego becomes a liability if it is associated with too much of Tamas and it becomes a cause of nuisance, disturbance, destruction, disruption and unhappiness. But if it is associated with Sattva, it becomes productive of much good. All the saints, all the good people have ego associated with Sattva. So the whole life of such persons becomes a continuous stream of benefit to others, good to others, solace to those who are afflicted, source of peace wherever there is disruption or quarrel. Wherever they go there is peace, peace, peace. Even when they are confronted with Tamoguna based Rajas, their Sattva overcomes it and the others are benefited. The story of Jagai and Madhai is famous. They were dare-devil, anti-social, ruffians, drunkards, in the time of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu. When Swami Nityanandaji, one of the disciples of Mahaprabhuji was pleading to the people the Harinama Sankirtan and singing Harinama, they happened to pass by. They were completely degenerated youngsters from a rich family. They barged into the gathering and shouted, "Stop this nonsense! Enough of it." But Swami Nityanandaji continued to do the loud chanting of the Lord's Name. The two were drinking. Madhai smashed the liquor pot on the head of Swami Nityanandaji. His skull was cut and he started bleeding profusely. Someone ran and informed Mahaprabhuji. He rushed to the spot. Swami Nityanandaji thought, "Mahaprabhuji is a divine being. If he is angry, the two youngsters will be destroyed." So he pleaded, "Please, don't be angry. Please forgive them." When Mahaprabhuji came near them, he embraced them. Finished. Everything changed totally! The two youngsters who were out to hurt and beat, thrash and destroy, fell at his feet and begged forgiveness. They burst into tears and began to cry. All their misdeeds came before their mental eyes. They held Mahaprabhuji's feet and begged crying, "Please forgive us. Please save us. Please redeem us." And they were totally transformed and became very saintly. On one side, there was pure

absolute Sattva which could overcome the worst of Tamas and Rajas on the other side. Thus the ethical implications of the ego is in accordance with the Gunas.

There is also a metaphysical implication of this ego, quite apart from its psychological and ethical implication. Now the Science of Yoga, the Vedanta Siddhanta, steps in and cautions the Sadhaka, seeker, Mumukshu against this ego. It is this ego, this 'I'-consciousness which separates the Jivatma from Paramatma. This 'I'-consciousness itself is the main reason for your being deprived of the ever-present Joy, Peace and Bliss of the Cosmic Principle which is the very centre of your being. Yes, the Joy, Peace and Bliss of the supreme Being is ever-present within you. But then, why are you deprived of it? Because of your 'I'-consciousness. The Vedanta Siddhanta analyses this 'I'- consciousness and concludes that wrong identification of oneself with the body—Dehadhyasa is its root cause. This Dehadhyasa keeps one away from one's own real nature, the Pure unbounded Consciousness. This Dehadhyasa creates the I-ness.

What is the anatomy and genesis of the 'I-sense?' Basically, it is also a state of awareness, an awareness which by its very nature is false, an error. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji likes to call it an aberration., The nature of this 'I'-sense is an awareness that has gone off at a tangent. Our real awareness is the eternal, Nirupadhic Self. There is no limiting adjuncts to our real Awareness, the pure Awareness of Being. That Awareness of Being is undiluted pure Bliss. The moment it moves away from this state of "pure Awareness of Being", It takes the shape of "I am Bliss" and then "I am this, I am that...." Finished. There starts the vitiation of awareness. Once the awareness moves away from the real nature of Self, it turns to Dehadhyasa and starts, 'I am this, I am that' and associates the Nirupadhic Self to various adjuncts and additions of material objects. Such erroneous awareness associated with the adjuncts is the 'I-sense.'

एकोहम्—'I am the One' is the Consciousness of the Almighty. It is attributeless, there is no modification, there is no limitation. It is transcendental. There is absolute Peace and Joy. But the moment it moves away from this pure 'I am' consciousness and feel 'I am so and so', it descends into darkness. The knowledge is turned completely topsy-turvy. In Vedanta it is called Vipareeta Jnana, that is, in place of the awareness of the Real, one erroneously accepts the world and object to be real. That is also an awareness, but turned upside down. It is basically an error, an outcome of having moved away from your real centre, the Self and identifying oneself with the body. How this happens? It is not stage by stage but the sum-totality. The moment you bring a coloured object near an absolutely hundred per cent clear, transparent crystal ball, the entire crystal becomes filled with that colour. The whole crystal becomes violet, green, red or whatever colour you bring into its proximity. In the same way, metaphysics of the ego is pure Awareness. When it becomes involved in the state of identification with the limiting factors that have come into its proximity, it gives rise to a limited separate ego or 'I'-consciousness, closely bound up with one name and one form. This problem arises due to the proximity of the limiting adjuncts of Karmendriyas (the action organs—speech, hand, feet, anus, sex organs), the five Pranas (Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana, Samana), the five Jnanendriyas (organs of knowledge—ear, skin, eyes, tongue, smell), the Antahkarana (the inner organs or instruments—mind, intellect, ego or I-awareness, Chitta—the subconscious mind). This creates a sense of difference with everyone else, a sense of separation from everyone else.

We shall not go into the question why the limiting adjuncts come into Its proximity. You cannot understand that. That is a thing which you have to experience. We cannot ask the question, "Why Maya came into proximity of Brahman?" When the Brahman

was quite all right, self-sufficient, independent in all the respects, All-full, absolutely Happy, why did He allow a second factor to come into His proximity and became united with Parasakti? Why Brahman who has, "I am the One" awareness, allowed the Lila of becoming many? Why did He create with the proximity of Maya or the Mula Prakriti, infinite universe and individual beings and all that? All these cannot be understood, these are to be experienced.

On account of the limiting adjuncts, the Jivatma develops individualistic, separatist ego. So there is a practical problem—clash and conflict with so many other egos. This erroneous consciousness is the basic problem, the barrier to be overcome. It is the veil between the Jivatma and Paramatma. It is known as Avarana—a veil of ignorance, Ajnana, spiritual ignorance or Avidya—nescience. The whole of spiritual Sadhana, whether it is the Jnana Yoga or Bhakti Yoga or Raja Yoga, is the effacement of this ego.

This explains the value and place of the Nishkama Karma Yoga, selfless service, in the context of the metaphysical side of spiritual life. It is a very valuable preparation for higher Sadhana of transcending the ego or effacing or eradicating the ego through the Ashtanga Yoga of Maharshi Patanjali or through the Navavidha Bhakti (nine modes of devotion) or through Sravana-Manana-Nididhyasana (listening to the scriptures, constant reflecting, profound and deep meditation), Viveka-Vichara, (discrimination between the Real and the unreal, enquiry into the nature of the Self, the Brahman). You can initiate the process of Sadhana in day-to-day life by giving up the self and selfishness, by giving up the desires and the pride of doership and by plunging into pure, selfless, desireless, egoless, service to others,—service to mother, father, elders, service to the society, to the nation, service to the poor, sick, suffering. The husband effaces his ego by serving his wife and family,—willing to undergo any

trouble, even if he is running temperature he goes to office and works,—provided he does it with Nishkama Bhava, selfless spirit and not because he is completely blinded by deluded attachment, infatuated attachment. For a real Nishkama Bhava, one should think that the wife, children and the family—all belong to God, and serve them in that spirit. It was this Nishkama Karmayoga that was taught by Lord Krishna to Arjuna. He says, 'Do your duty in such a way that it will liberate you and Karma cannot bind you.' He explains Arjuna how to be in Karma, yet not be affected by Karma, that is how to do duty in such a manner so that Karma will not stick to you in the form of Karma-phala or the Law of Karma.

It is the ego principle that separates you from the Bliss of Brahman from the infinite Peace of Brahman, from the total Freedom, from Brahmic Consciousness. Therefore, the effacement of the ego principle is the quintessential point in spiritual Sadhana, in spiritual life and Yoga. Yoga is effacing or erasing the ego and moving towards God. Whatever you do that erases ego effectively can be a part and parcel of Yoga, even if it is not found in the books.

Gurudev had made some notes for himself about some of the things he practised when he was doing Sadhana in his Swargashram days: **Sadhana for eradication of ego**. They were his private notes. Somehow, years later the notes still happened to remain somewhere in some bundles of papers in a particular room not used by anyone except Gurudev. It was Dangarwala Kutir. It was a later attachment to the Yoga Sadhana Kutir which originally consisted of five rooms only. That was swept, kept clean, and a big and a small buckets of water were always kept there. Gurudev had a chronic diarrhoea of a very peculiar variety. It was due to overdoing of austerity during his Swargashram days of intense Sadhana. In winter, he used to stand in waist-deep freezing Ganga water for several hours at a

stretch in early morning. As a result of this, he had developed chronic lumbago and this trouble of diarrhoea and sometimes he had had no conscious control over anal spincter. Suddenly it may cease to function and it was impossible to predict when. When Gurudev came for checking and inspection en route evening walk, he occasionally used this Dangarwala Kutir. He always had a key to it. In those days there were no lavatories in the Ashram and we had to go to the jungle to attend the natural call. In the rainy season, the whole place was ridden with mosquitoes and malaria. If you went out, the mosquitoes followed you even indoors. When you sat for natural call you had to keep shaking your hands with branches and leaves. In spite of that you get stung in twenty places. I wonder how I could bear all that. I will not be able to do so now. One-half of the entire population of Rishikesh would be bed-ridden with malaria during the monsoon. That was the Wartime. The army people who were disciples of Gurudev always brought with them tab. Mepacrin and quinine. They used to narrate how soldiers serving in Assam and other places were lined up everyday for parade and one sergeant came with tab. Mepacrin and another with water. The soldiers had to open their mouth and swallow it, and then only the sergeants would move ahead. An army cannot afford to have their soldiers in bed with malaria.

When I came here, I was given the task of keeping the Dangarwala Kutir clean, spick and span. I wanted thorough cleaning and started dusting all the things. There was a bundle of cloth so full of dust, horrible dust! I took the bundle down for dusting, I opened it. Among the papers, I saw a tiny tear of pad. It contained the notes that Gurudev had written for himself, in his beautiful handwriting in green ink. On one of the pages was written:

- Go to that Kshetra where you are insulted. • Go to the Kshetra of that arrogant young Mahant and take Bhiksha.

From this we can understand what the plight of Sadhus might be! If you are insulted you normally say, "I won't go there tomorrow." So his mind also must have told him likewise, 'The young Mahant is very rude and arrogant. From tomorrow I won't go there.' But he might have reflected, 'What is it that is saying this? Oh, it is my ego.' It is not good for an aspirant to keep company which always praises you. It is better to be called names sometimes. So he might have told to himself, 'Go to that Kshetra where you are insulted, criticised and take your Bhiksha from there only. It is good for my spiritual health.' Sometimes very bitter medicine is very good for your maladies. The direct malady of the individual seeker is 'I'. I am not talking about the worldly people. I don't consider any of you as the worldly people. You are all Sadhakas, aspirants, seekers seeking liberation. So for you, your greatest enemy is your own self in the form of 'I-ness'. It is your greatest problem, greatest disease. That leaves you in a very big chase and make you dance to its tune. You are completely dominated by it and you become miserable, Therefore, he notes:

- Serve sweepers and Bhangis.
- Try to serve those who abuse you.

You will find more of these notes in Light Fountain and in Sivananda's Gospel of Divine Life. Swami Sahajanandaji has reproduced them in Gurudev's handwriting and surprisingly it is more clear and vivid than the original itself.

When I saw these notes I was fascinated. In those days, I had a very good friend, Swami Narayanananda who was doing Puja and who has written commentaries on Viveka-Chudamani and Sri Guru Gita and translated them. He always used to occupy the side room of the Bhajan Hall, towards the Divine Life Pillar side. He used to type out Gurudev's manuscripts and all that. I ran to him and told:

"Look, what I have discovered! Did you know about its existence?"

He looked at it and said, "I have not seen it till now. Where did you find it?"

I said, "It was in the Dangarwala Kutir in a very dust-filled cloth."

Incidentally, soon after that Gurudev spoke about himself for the first time when he dictated some information himself to Sri Seturamanji who later wrote from it, the book, **Saint Sivananda** under the assumed name Sivaprasada. As the old paper-bits were falling apart Swami Narayananandaji sent it for block-making. So I also made use of these personal notes in Light Fountain.*

*In Swamiji's hand, the following laconic self-instructions were found:

1. Serve Bhangis.
2. Serve rogues.
3. Serve inferiors.
4. Eat from Mohammedans' hands.
5. Remove faecal matter.
6. Clean clothes of Sadhus. Take delight.
7. Carry water.

Another leaf bears the legend:

Namaskar Sadhana: *Give Namaskar first to everybody.*

A third page bears on one side:

1. Akrodha state
2. Nirvaira state

and on the other side

1. Do not revenge.
2. Resist not evil.
3. Return good for evil.
4. Bear insult and injury.

In another paper the hints for self-discipline are:

58. Never be rude, harsh or cruel.
59. Develop good demeanour, manners, extreme politeness, courtesy, etiquette, nobility, gentleness, mildness.
66. There is nothing to be hated in this world. Hatred is ignorance. All contempt for any thing or being must be removed by love and Vichara.

On two other neat little pages:

1. Forget like a child an injury done by somebody immediately.

So this was Gurudev's formula for effacing the sense of superiority. India is a caste-ridden society, wherever you go there is high and low. Gurudev came from a very respectable Brahmin family, direct descendants of Sri Appaya Dikshitar and this ego is not easy to go. Also, everyone shows respect for Brahmin and Sannyasis. So the Brahmin Abhiman becomes still more reinforced by Sannyasa Abhiman. So no wonder that when he wrote the **Song of Karmayogin** one of the earliest things he said was:

Give up Brahmin-Sannyasa Abhiman.
Give up Vairagya-Tyaga Abhiman.

He had both these Abhimans. How did he try to root them out? Firstly, he went and served the untouchables,

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2. Never keep it in the heart. It kindles hatred.
Cultivate: A. *1. Maitri, 2. Karuna, 3. Daya, 4. Prem*
B. 1. Kshama.
One significant para runs: *Sadhuism is a new birth. If big Kshettars abuse you, bear that. Do not think of the past life and birth.*
Then another: *Walk without shoes as far as possible. Hardy life till death is necessary for Sadhu.*
Again: *For a month or fifteen days, leave Swargasharam without informing anybody. Take two clothes and one blanket. Roam about along the banks of Ganga canal from Haridwar to Meerut. Live on Madhukari. Do not talk with the villagers. Observe Mauna on these days.*
Little hints here and there show that a great deal of intense meditation had been gone through:
More time (8 hours) should be spent in meditation and meditation alone, even 12, 16 hours daily.
Even study and medical treatment should be given up for sometime—pure meditation alone.
Winter must be well-utilised. That is the best time for meditation.
His austerity with regard to the mastery over palate has been of the severest type:
1. Give up salt. 2. Give up sugar. 3. Give up spices. 4. Give up vegetables. 5. Give up chillies. 6. Give up tamarind.
Another para adds elsewhere: *Unless you practise all these things you cannot become a real Sadhu.*
—Light Fountain, Chapter XVIII

the scavengers and the sweepers. Even when he became famous and he came down to this side of Ganga, he carried on the same Sadhana. I believe that it might be an extension of this Sadhana that he did not allow anyone to touch his feet. This was to root out the Sannyasa Abhiman. The Tyaga Abhiman is inflated by people saying, "Oh, what a great Tyagi he is! He is a great Virakta!" No one could touch his feet. Absolutely no one could approach him standing or walking. When he sat, he kept his feet down but he put something between him and the visitors.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Dev was also born in an orthodox Brahmin family in a small village. The rural people are more tradition bound. They are more orthodox than the urban Hindu people. Even in urban society, there was orthodoxy but a little toned down under the influence of the urban set-up, modernisation, westernisation. The village people are very orthodox and you cannot make a change in their stand about Brahmin, Sudra, untouchability, etc. You can understand the set-up of rural Bengal 150 years back. When Sri Ramakrishna Dev came into the Nivritti Marga and took whole heartedly to the spiritual life and Sadhana, one of the things that was confronting him was the inability to shed the sense of being a Brahmin. Gurudev was very keenly analytical. So Gurudev understood the whole problem in a very precise and intellectual manner. Sri Ramakrishna Dev did not have that advantage. He was not much educated. He had not read the western psychology or even Yogic philosophy. He had no scriptural background. He had not studied Patanjali's Yoga Darshana or any other thing. He did not analyse all this fineness of the ego. The other disadvantage that he had was, he came to the spiritual life, when he was hardly 18/19 years old. He left his village when he was seventeen years old. In some way this is parallel to Sri Ramana Maharshi attaining Illumination very soon. But Sri Ramakrishna Dev was in

a very peculiar state—he was not a consciously illuminated being. He did not understand what his state was. When he came to Dakshineshwara, he lived in a small room outside the temple premises and used to cook his own food.

When he plunged into Sadhana, the Brahmin ego did not leave him. As he progressed in Sadhana, he began to think, 'This is a big obstacle. It means I still consider myself as this body born to human parents.' There was a Harijan settlement outside the Dakshineshwara village. When they were away at work, he used to go there and wipe, sweep and clean the floor of their huts with his own hair. He had very long hair at that time.

Gurudev had already practised that Sadhana in Swargashram. He came to Rishikesh during the end of 1923 or beginning of 1924. That is at the age of thirty-six. For the first six or nine months, he stayed in a hut on Gangaji's bank in Ramnagar till the terrible floods of 1924 which washed away the old Lakshman Jhoola. The fury of flood brought Gangaji into Ramnagar.

Gurudev was a sage of practical wisdom. He tried to efface this ego in various ways. He was the first to prostrate before even his own disciples, even to Grihasthi devotees and pilgrims who came for his Darshana. Other orthodox Ashrams and Sannyasis took serious objection to this.

When Gurudev left Swargashram and came to this side of Gangaji, he had no place to stay in. There was a broken set of building which was once a Dharmashala (below the present S.P.L.), but the owners lost interest because the road was shifted away from its front. In the beginning, there was no motorable road. The footpath from Rishikesh to Lakshman Jhoola was going via Gurudev Kutir, in front of the post office, Ramashram library, Hanuman Mandir, Darshan Mahavidyalaya, Lakshman Kund and through the ravine and then joined

the present road, where there is a row of shops. When the motorable road was constructed, this road was abandoned. The motorable road took a sharp left turn just before Gurudev Kutir and went past Ganesh Kutir. So every one passed from behind this Dharmasala and it became abandoned. In rainy season, donkeys, dogs, cattle used to take shelter in it. When Gurudev came to this side he first occupied it. In the beginning there was no cooking. There were two students. They used to go to Baba Kali Kamaliwala Kshetra and bring Bhiksha and Gurudev also ate the same thing. But in the winter, by the time they brought it, it would become cold, so they had to heat it. Later on, they requested the Kshetra to give uncooked ration. There were six persons including Gurudev when the dry ration was sanctioned. Every fortnight they brought rice, Moong, wheat flour and potatoes. One of Gurudev's Brahmin disciples used to cook for Gurudev. So he might have thought, 'Why should I keep a Brahmin?' So for his personal attendance and cooking he took a South Indian toddy-tapper disciple belonging to a scheduled caste. In South India this caste was considered to be very low even by other scheduled caste people.

* * *

We did a Parikrama of Bharatavarsha in the year 1950. We went by the East Coast. We visited Haridwar, Lucknow, Faizabad, Ayodhya, Varanasi, Gaya, Patna, Calcutta, Waltair, Vijayawada and Madras. We had a First Class tourist saloon with 12 or 14 beds, kitchen, store-room, etc. Practically, it was our house on wheels for two months. Swami Purushottam was Gurudev's assistant and Swami Govindananda was his cook. When we reached Madras Central Station, we had to leave this Saloon for the South India pilgrimage, because upto this there was broad-gauge and in South it was metre-gauge. The metre-gauge saloon was waiting for us at Egmore station. It was a tremendous job shifting all the things from Madras Central to Egmore station. Thereafter, our

first call was Villupuram. Then we progressed south to Thanjavur and all that. There is a place called Mayiladuthurai which is also known as Mayuram. There is a pontifical seat belonging to a non-Brahmin religious devout community. The Brahmin pontifical seats are in Joshimath, Jagannath Puri, Sringeri and Dwarka—thick Brahmins only. Even among the Sannyasis there are some Brahmin-Sannyasis who don't mix with other Sannyasis. They take a Danda, a staff and are known as Dandi-Sannyasis. You may be surprised to know in Baba Kali Kamaliwala Kshetra, there is a separate kitchen for Dandi-Sannyasis and the cooks, assistants, servants are all Brahmins only in this particular section. It is called Gaur-Langar. The Dandi-Sannyasis take Bhiksha only from the Gaur-Langar.

This non-Brahmin pontiff of the pontifical seat near Mayuram, had come on a Badri-Kedar pilgrimage in 1949. When he came on this pilgrimage he came to learn that Swami Paramanandaji was organising an All-India Tour of Gurudev. So he requested, "When Swamiji comes to South India, he must be my guest for at least one or two days." So we had included this Adhinam in our tour programmes. These non-Brahmin seats are called Adhinams or Saiva Siddhantams. All the disciples are non-Brahmins. They have their own traditional scriptures in Tamil,—no Sanskrit scriptures. The pontiff was a very, very dignified, very, very venerable and very, very Sattvic Sadhu. Their riches are tremendous. They have got on their Adhinams elephants, a specially bedecked horse, camels and all their paraphernalia. Each Adhinam has its own temple just as each Sankaracharya Peeth has its temple as Sringeri Peeth has the temple of Mother Sharada. When we reached there Gurudev was received with temple honours. The temple elephant garlanded him, a richly caparisoned and bedecked horse with decorated silver cloth around it, flowers, decorated flags and all those symbols of royalty. In a Hindu temple, the deity is regarded as a divine

royalty. Gurudev was received like a royal personality with temple honours in the forenoon. He was very comfortably lodged. The main function was arranged in the evening in a huge hall. The hall was packed with the devotees of the pontiff. Gurudev was always very punctual. If he was required at 5.00 p.m., he would reach there at 4.50 or latest by 4.55 p.m. He always reached five, ten minutes before the time. The pontiff might have thought, "All the great people come late." (I come late not because I am great. But because I am old and you know the story of Late Latif.) Gurudev was escorted to the dais and then to his seat by the next person in command. All the devotees were doing Sankirtan and were waiting for the arrival of Periyaval. Swami Paramanandaji always used to be behind Gurudev. Swami Venkatesanandaji used to take down every word that came from Gurudev.

The proclaimer came with a silver maze and an ornamental stick and announced the arrival of the Adhinam. He was wearing a big turban and looked very dignified. The proclaimer stood at the foot of the steps leading to the stage. Gurudev who was sitting in a chair, respectfully stood up as the Adhinam started climbing the steps. God alone knows what was going on in Gurudev's mind. The moment the pontiff stepped on the stage, Gurudev fell Sashtanga Dandavat Namaskara, prostrating fully flat on the floor from head to toe and his hands fully stretched beyond his head. All were simply struck-dumb! All the devotees stood up, the pontiff was very much shocked and taken aback, and he tried to step back, but could not as he was on the edge of the stage. The pontiff simply exclaimed, "Oh, oh! No, no!! This should not be done." And then Gurudev got up and went on as if nothing unusual had happened.

Gurudev belonged to a high Brahmin family and the pontiff belonged to a lower caste. I take it, perhaps two things were in Gurudev's mind. Firstly, the pontiff should not feel the least distinction or difference. Secondly, there should not be in his own mind the least,

even a hair's breadth vestige of his being what his birth has made him. So to cut the Gordian knot, he took the bull by the horns. Gurudev threw himself flat on the floor. It took five minutes for the people to grasp this and for the pontiff to settle down while Gurudev was his usual self as though nothing unusual had happened.

Imagine the state of eminence Gurudev had reached and even after all that his such humility. In 1947, we observed the Diamond Jubilee of Gurudev. We had invited the Maharaja Sahib of Tehri. When he came, he was received with a band and all that. The Maharaja Sahib stepped on bare feet and touched Gurudev's feet and Gurudev touched his feet. I was seeing a person to whom a ruling King touched his feet in front of all, the other man's disciples, his own followers, and Gurudev touching the King's feet.

In those days, the present post office was Gurudev's main office. Every year an I.C.S. officer Sri Pannalalji who was a devotee of Swami Tapovanji Maharaj, used to visit Gurudev for paying his respects. In winter, Swami Tapovanji was coming down to Rishikesh and Sri Pannalalji would come for his Darshan, and whenever he came to Rishikesh, he would come to our Ashram. He used to come in the evening during Gurudev's Darshan time. Gurudev gave him great regards and offered him a chair. Once, after the interview was over both of them got up to go. When Sri Pannalalji stepped out, his peon was somewhere away. In those days such a high officer would not stir out without a batch-peon (Daftari). The peon used to assist in putting on his shoes. So he was nonplused by his absence. He was looking for him this side and that side. Gurudev immediately sized up the situation and Gurudev promptly himself took the shoes of Sri Pannalalji and placed them at his feet. You must have seen Sri Pannalalji's face at that time.

These are the living lessons of absolute egolessness. Here is an I.C.S. officer coming here to have Gurudev's

Darshan, Satsanga and get some wisdom. All that Gurudev fulfils. When it comes up he is the servant of the servant of the servant of the servant of the Lord's feet. This I saw with my own eyes. This is a state of a being who has transcended the self and become established in Brahmin.

चित्रं वटतरोर्मूले वृद्धाः शिष्याः गुरुर्युवा।
गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तु छिन्नसंशयाः।

'Under a banyan tree, a young Guru is seated with disciples who are old. Mauna is the teaching of the Guru, (yet) all the doubts of the disciples are removed.'

In certain ways, Gurudev was not different from Dakshina Murti. He too did not preach, but what Gurudev did was itself more than a total sermon or a big lecture or a big wisdom teaching.

Peace be unto all beings in the Universe. Peace be unto you all, and the supreme Peace of perfect egolessness, the supreme Bliss of total absence of ego be unto you all. That state is God.

You know Gurudev's equations:

What is Jiva?	God plus I	=	Jiva.
What is Brahman?	Jiva minus I	=	Brahman.

12

SELF-CONTROL

I fast on Ekadasi. I do not take even a drop of water. I take milk and fruits on Sundays. I wandered without food during my Parivrajaka life. I slept on roadside at night without clothing during winter. I ate dried bread with water. I lead a simple natural life.

—Swami Sivananda.

Fortunate is the human birth. Even more fortunate is to be endowed with the desire and taste for achieving something higher than mere sense-satisfaction or mere petty desire fulfilment. For, the satisfaction derived in this manner is too temporary, too deceptive, and fraught with defects and imperfections.

दोषेण तीव्रो विषयः कृष्णसर्पविषादपि।

'The sense-objects are more intense in its defects than the poison of the cobra' (Vivekachudamani-79). The ultimate result of the continuous satisfaction of any sense is not pleasure but pain, disease and various types of undesirable fruits and effects in the individual's life. Bhartrihari says, 'Enjoyments of embodied beings are fleeting like the quick play of lightning within a mass of cloud' (Vairagya Shatakam-35). He also says,

भोगा न भुक्ता वयमेव भुक्ताः

'The worldly pleasures are not enjoyed by us, but we ourselves have been devoured' (Ibid-7). Lord Krishna warns us in Srimad Bhagavad-Gita:

ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगाः दुःखयोनय एव ते।
आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः।।

'The enjoyments that are born of contacts are only generators of pain; they have a beginning and an end. (So) O Arjuna! The wise do not indulge in them' (V-22).

Mahabharata tells about it vividly through the narration of the story of the King Yayati. He wanted the sensual enjoyments indefinitely. But he was unable to continue it because his body became old, it became decrepit and the senses became senile, yet his desire, his craving for enjoyment continued.

तृष्णा न जीर्णा वयमेव जीर्णाः ।

'Desire is not reduced in force though we ourselves are reduced to senility' (V.S.-7). This is one of the defects of pursuit of sense-gratification. It strengthens more and more, the desire for enjoyments. The senses are never saturated. If you hire a porter and give him four rupees, he is not satisfied and asks for five rupees. Now suppose you give him six rupees, he is satisfied and goes away. But the senses are not like that. There are two reasons. Firstly, the porter is different, you are different. Once satisfied the porter goes away and you go your way. Afterwards, there is no contact. The two are in two different worlds. You may not see the porter in your life time again. But these *senses are within you and remain with you all the twenty-four hours from birth to death. You cannot shed them off.* Unless you bring about a complete change in your life and your relationship towards them, they would not leave you.

The story of King Yayati shows us the second defect, namely, *the demands of senses never cease.* You cannot dispose them off by satisfying them. They can never be satisfied. The more you try to satisfy them, the more intense they become. Sense-gratification ultimately leads to the bitter fruits—disease, restlessness, ignominy, infamy. Though the senses become old, feeble and senile, though they become cold and lose energy, the craving for the repetition of the sense-pleasures intensify to such an extent that even when they cease their

demands, the person becomes tormented by its craving. Due to having pampered them, indulged in them and always satisfied them, the craving intensifies. Until and unless one goes beyond, rises upwards, transcends or manages by some method to put an end to the very existence of that craving once and for all. How this will be done is the Sadhaka's look out. A Sadhaka is supposed to be a wise person,—reflecting, discriminating and guided by the spiritual injunctions and instructions of Guru and his own experience, guided by all the light on the path that we have inherited as our heritage from the luminous, effulgent past. But this is possible only if there is an element of wisdom. But in the beginning, no being is wise yet, and one goes on pampering the senses and indulging in them. So afterwards, when he lives a life of a Sadhaka, they become a great liability due to such intense craving being ever present and tormenting.

Our scriptures explain to us very, very vividly this situation and warn us, "Beware!"

न जातु कामः कामानाम् उपभोगेन शाम्यति ।
हविषा कृष्णवर्त्मेव भूय एवाभिवर्धते ।।

'The craving for sense-gratification never ceases with the enjoyment of sense-objects. On the contrary it grows stronger and stronger like fire fed by ghee' (Srimad Bhagavata IX-19-14, Manu-smriti II-94).

The craving that arises within is never subdued by satisfying it with enjoyments, but on the contrary, it intensifies just as by giving offerings to the sacrificial fire in the altar, the fire does not diminish but it flares up. So by satisfying the cravings of the senses with enjoyments, they will not be allayed but will become more intense and stimulated. So a wise man does not indulge himself in sense-enjoyments. But in spite of such clear warning, if one indulges in sense-gratification, he is either a fool or a rogue, may be sometimes this and sometimes that.

Religion is a strong force, it has a very strong influence on human beings. So the great seers and sages with the good intentions enshrined these valuable teachings in religion, so that they reach to all the people, to every generation without fail. They were not after name and fame, many of them did not even give their names. But with the welfare of the posterity at their heart, keeping in mind the good and welfare of the people so that they may be successful in life, they took the trouble of enshrining these teachings into sacred scriptures. There is only one way of having ultimate progress, peace and happiness or attaining anything here or hereafter, that is to become wise and not to ignore the guidance and wisdom teachings that have been given to us. We have inherited this rich heritage of wisdom teachings and in spite of them if one goes concupiscent and brings about one's own detriment, then he is either a fool or an ignorant or both. Sometimes it may be due to ignorance, sometimes knowingly. But the result is the same. There is a famous adage, *ignorance is no excuse in law.* Still more telling is the fact that fire does not spare an ignorant infant who goes near it. The fire will injure the child as much as a careless person. Nature is unfailing in giving to everyone the experience that is a part of Its make-up. Water drowns everyone, whether he is a beggar or a rich man. Nature is unerring in its manifestation. So ignorance of its quality does not save one from the result of going out of the way where Nature or the law is concerned.

Bhagavan warns us clearly in just one line, ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगाः दुःखयोनय एव ते। 'The enjoyments that are born of contacts are generators of pain.' What more unambiguous and clear terms can a teacher use than these? Any enjoyment or pleasurable experience brought by contact of any one of the five senses with the sense-objects is a source of sorrow. In just one terse line the whole world of meaning epitomising the essence of human sense-experience, Bhagavan has given! If you

have a little commonsense or intelligence that is enough for you to be ever Jagrat, ever vigilant and be on your guard. How can you not react to the warning of Bhagavan? Even a bird, beast or a worm does not go to any environment which is against its safety and runs away from the unsafe place. If a human being with intelligence is not reacting in this manner there must be something fundamentally wrong with him. Bhartrihari warns us in just three words: भोगे रोग भयम् । 'In sensual enjoyment there is the fear of disease' (V.S.-31). All our scriptures and compositions of Yogis, spiritual teachers tell us the same thing.

Gurudev says, "Nip it in the bud. Do not allow it to assume a bigger shape. Otherwise, it will be too late." These wisdom teachings are our guide, our guard, our defence, our armour. If you want to be safe, you must react to this wonderful wisdom treasure, which lay it in unambiguous, very, very clear, very, very lucid and easy to remember way. Gurudev has given us the way of avoiding such pitfalls by raising our entire life on discipline. He asserts, "Self-control is the very basis of all the Sadhana."

We celebrate lives of great men, because such celebrations act as incentives for us to emulate them. The purpose of cherishing the memory of the sublime personalities is that it becomes an uplifting force to enable us to raise the level of our life to a nobler plane of existence, nobler plane of thinking, feeling, reasoning. Thus living a nobler life, we bless ourselves. Ultimately, each individual is one's own uplifter or one's own downgrader too.

Bhagavan Sri Krishna tells the entire humanity in his universal gospel of wisdom teaching of the Gita (VI-5):

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ।।

'One should, raise oneself by one's own Self alone, let not one lower oneself; for the Self alone is the friend of oneself and this Self alone is the enemy of oneself.'

Strive to uplift yourself by your own Self. Under what circumstances can one succeed in doing this? That also He makes clear in other places in the same Bhagavad-Gita. You should study Gita with a perspective mind, because something said in one chapter, may have connecting link in another chapter. If you study Gita in such integrated way, you can put together such links and then you begin to understand the truths told by the great world Teacher. He tells us under what circumstances one will successfully be able to raise oneself by one's own Self: If you put yourself voluntarily under discipline, if you purposefully, sincerely, earnestly train yourself.

Nothing can be forced upon anyone in this world. The moment some force is exercised, one may yield to it for the time being and do something. But the moment the force is removed, one will become what one is. It is only when something is willingly, voluntarily done with the conviction that in this lies your highest welfare, your supreme good and only if you take great interest in doing it, when you take it upon yourself on your own free will developing enthusiasm for it, that you can succeed. Enthusiasm is Mother Lakshmi, the Goddess of Auspiciousness and Blessedness. You must have enthusiasm, as well as, sincerity for what you are engaged in doing.

You can deceive yourself, but you cannot deceive God. If you are sincere, you consciously launch a voluntary campaign of self-discipline and training yourself in self-control.

Gurudev used to call the Sadhana Week—a programme of spiritual practice, twice a year. In those days, the main holidays for the whole nation were during the Christmas and the Easter. So it was convenient for

all to attend the Sadhana Weeks during these vacations. In those days, there were no superfast trains and air travel, yet attendance in Sadhana Weeks was always full. Later Sri Sri Maa Anandamayee Sangha adopted a similar programme once every year and called it Samyama Saptaha. No Sadhana is possible without Samyama. It will be like trying to fill a cracked pot. However you may try, you would not succeed storing water in it.

In Samyama Saptaha, you have to observe a very strict self-control. First and the last days were fasting with Ganga water only. Absolute fast on these two days, no tea, coffee, milk, no fruit or fruit juice, nothing except water. On remaining five days the Sadhaka could take a special menu, only once the whole day, at the mid-day. On the second and the sixth days a special Brahma-Khichadi was made; all the things rice, pulses, vegetables, etc., were put together for that Khichadi. On the third and the fifth day only boiled vegetables without any seasoning. On the fourth day, only milk and fruits that too once in twenty-four hours. But they found that many of the Sadhakas could not undergo such a strict austerity. So later on, they made two categories: first class Sadhakas and second class Sadhakas. The latter were allowed a little milk and fruits as supper in addition to the first class Sadhakas' routine.

The point is, one's own sincere efforts, one's own Purushartha is necessary to enable one to successfully raise oneself. What are the circumstances, situation or condition that will enable you to be successful in your effort, so that you will enjoy the real fruit of raising your life to sublime heights? It is only through voluntary self-discipline and by training yourself religiously to become the master of your senses, by training yourself in keeping the senses under control. Then only you would be successful in raising your life to sublime heights. Otherwise it will constantly be a losing battle. So Lord Krishna says:

बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः।
अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत् ।।

'The Self is a friend of the self for him who has conquered himself by the Self; but to the unconquered (lower) self, this Self stands in the position of an enemy like the (external) foe' (Gita VI-6).

If the senses are not in individual's control, his senses become his own enemy. But the same senses become his best friends, if he is able to check them and keep them under control. Lord Krishna has also given you the prescription for success. उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानम् । 'Let a man lift himself by his own Self.' That becomes possible only if you make the senses your friends and not your enemy. The senses become your friends only when you overcome them. To make this clear and vivid to us the Kathopanishad goes one step further by giving a very effective analogy:

आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि शरीरं रथमेव तु।
बुद्धिं तु सारथिं विद्धि मनः प्रग्रहमेव च।।

इन्द्रियाणि हयान्याहुर्विषयांस्तेषु गोचरान् ।
आत्मेन्द्रियमनोयुक्तं भोक्तेत्याहुर्मनीषिणः।।

'Know the Atman as the Lord of the chariot, the body as the chariot; know the intellect as the charioteer and the mind as the reins.'

'The senses are the horses and their objects their roads, the self who is united with the body, the senses and the mind, the wise call as the enjoyer' (Katha. 1-3-3 & 4)

The senses are like five horses to which a chariot is hitched. Atman is the owner of the chariot, the body is the chariot, the intellect is the charioteer. The mind is the link, (the reins) between the charioteer and the horses. Sitting in this body-chariot, you have to reach the supreme Destination of your life, Liberation, going beyond all the sorrows, pain and sufferings and entering into the Experience of perfect Joy. Supreme Bliss,

indescribable Peace, Joy and Bliss. That is your Destination. That is the Destination not merely of Sannyasis, Yogis or special exceptional people but of every single human individual. Each and every individual born on this earth has as his/her supreme Destination of life, the attaining of the divine destiny of experiencing divine Peace, Joy, Bliss, the Perfect State of fearlessness, freedom and liberation. This body chariot of yours can be an effective vehicle to take you to that Destination, if it is able to stick to the proper path.

कृष्ण गोविन्द गोपाल गाते चलो ।
मन को विषयों के विष से हटाते चलो ।
देखोन्द्रियों के न घोड़े भगें ।
रातदिन इनपे संयमके कोड़े लगें ।
अपने रथको सुमार्गमें बढ़ाते चलो ।।

'Keep on going on the path singing the Name of Govinda. Proceed on the right path by controlling the sense-horses and repeatedly using the whip of self-control, and by withdrawing the mind from the poison-like sensual objects.'

It is only when the chariot goes on the right path that one can reach the destination. If it loses the way, then finished. It may be bogged down or it will get lost in the wilderness of the cycle of birth and death from which one cannot come out:

यस्त्वविज्ञानवान् भवत्यमनस्कः सदाऽशुचिः।
न स तत्पदमाप्नोति संसारं चाधिगच्छति ।।

'But he who has no discrimination and whose mind is not under control and who is always impure, does not reach that Goal, but enters into the round of births and deaths' (Katha. I-iii-7)

If the horses are not controlled, they may run amuck and it will be an absolute disaster. Therefore, if this body-chariot should ultimately take you to That grand and glorious, wonderful Destination of the supreme

spiritual perfection and blessedness, the charioteer has to take it on the right path. This can be done only if the charioteer has the horses under control, only if he has a firm hold on the reins. The horses are very, very unruly and turbulent. The charioteer must be sober and should keep clarity of the mind. He should also be ever awake and alert. Then only he will have a firm control over the reins and the horses will be directed along the right path and can reach the Destination.

यस्तु विज्ञानवान् भवति समनस्कः सदा शुचिः।
स तु तत्पदमाप्नोति यस्माद् भूयो न जायते ।।

विज्ञानसारथिर्यस्तु मनःप्रग्रहवान् नरः।
सोऽध्वनः परमाप्नोति तद्विष्णोः परमं पदम् ।।

'But he who has understanding, who has his mind always under control and who is pure, reaches that goal, whence he is not born again.'

'But, he who has discerning intelligence as the charioteer and a well-controlled mind as the reins, reaches the end of his life journey, that highest Place of Lord Vishnu (Katha. I-iii-8 & 9).

Kathopanishad says, the body is like a chariot, the turbulent senses, the horses, which can be controlled only by the intelligence and not by the mind, when the intelligence is endowed with good intention and is alert with vigilant attitude, and when it constantly exercises, active discrimination, it keeps enquiring ceaselessly, 'In what lies my welfare? Which is Sreya or really beneficial? In which lies my highest good? In which lies the guarantee of my success in Sadhana and my progress in the spiritual life?' If such enquiry is done constantly and if one discriminates between that which is favourable and that which is unfavourable to one's spiritual life, one should be able to exercise restraint in the light of this discrimination and the journey ends successfully and the destination would be reached. Otherwise there will be remorse, regret and repentance, weeping and wailing.

Just like the ultimate fate of lung cancer patient, the ultimate fate of spiritual disease in the form of indulgence in actions violating Dharma, ethics or morality is certain. His life would be in vain, he will be reduced to a deplorable, pitiable, tragic situation, a creation of his own doing. Therefore, the Upanishad becomes a beacon which meticulously warns us and leads us to disciplining and controlling ourselves. These unruly and turbulent sense-horses are to be controlled by the intelligence. While the intelligence is inward (it is one of the four aspects of Antahkarana), the senses are outward, physical, biological. What is the connecting link? It is the mind. The senses act according to the Vrittis arising in the mind.

इन्द्रियेभ्यः पराह्यर्था अर्थेभ्यश्च परं मनः।
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्बुद्धेरात्मा महान् परः ।।

'Beyond the senses are the rudiments of objects, beyond these rudiments is the mind, beyond the mind is the intellect, beyond the intellect is the great Self' (Katha. I-iii-10)

So the intellect should watch and control the mind, and the mind, the senses. Gurudev was never tired of reiterating again and again: "*Never allow even a single wrong Vritti to remain in your mind even for a single second.* The moment you become aware that a wrong Vritti has arisen in your mind, immediately take action and cast it out. Nip it in the bud. Don't allow it to assume the form of a big wave. A Vritti spreads like a wave and becomes bigger and bigger and soon it will overwhelm you and then it will be too late. Beware of lack of awareness and vigilance right from the beginning itself. Don't fail to take prompt action." Gurudev used to say, "*Nip it in the bud and throw it out.*"

This body has read diverse teachings of so many saints, known so many spiritual teachers, but no one, no Sannyasi, Yogi, spiritual teacher or Master has given such meticulous instructions of how to bring about

self-discipline and self-control as Gurudev has given. You read his *Mind—Its Mysteries and Control.* It is forever a unique book of its kind in this world. He used to say, 'Throw out anything that is inimical to you the moment it arises by cultivating Nirodha Samskaras. Cultivate a certain tendency in your mind to act as a watchman, as a guard, so that the moment any thought, idea, impulse, sentiment or emotion which is of a negative, unspiritual or impure nature comes up, that very moment it is thrown out by this guard.'

In big exclusive places like clubs, restaurants in West, they employ some very strong men who are known as bouncers. If any person tries to create the slightest trouble in such establishments, he will be bodily lifted and thrown out by the bouncers. Likewise, you have to create watch-dogs of your Vrittis. Maharshi Patanjali calls them Nirodha Samskaras. It is a tendency or an impression in the mind, always ready to act automatically to throw out the negative or impure Vrittis. You should cultivate this method which Maharshi Patanjali's Yoga Darshan has shown. Gurudev used to suggest the use of this method. All this is possible, only if the charioteer, the intellect keeps on a firm control and governs the body-chariot like the master that it is. The mind is the reins in the hand of this charioteer for controlling the sense-horses and directing the chariot on the right path.

If the mind is pure, the senses will be pure in behaviour. If the mind is impure, the senses indulge in all sorts of bad actions. If the mind thinks nobly, the senses will assist you in engaging you in noble selfless activity. If you have a deep desire to help others, you will become a Paropakari. As a man thinketh so he becometh. Your outer actions are merely the ultimate manifestation upon the physical plane of your thoughts, Vrittis.

Why a man allows himself to be dragged by the negative Vrittis? Because the intellect whose responsibility it is to eliminate them, is in slumber. Therefore, Vichara, Viveka and the intellect should always be active throughout the waking period. You should be constantly engaged in active discrimination. But suppose you have not cultivated the Nirodha Samskara and you are not able to control the Vrittis and the senses, and the negative Samskaras have already taken deep root within you, what measures should you take? Gurudev shows the way: "The negative Samskaras are very strong even when in bud form, so immediately leave that place, that environment where you are likely to have a downfall. Get away from there and go to a temple or in the midst of the people in the Satsanga, run in open, take a cold water bath, do Japa. If one method fails take recourse to another method, if that too fails take recourse to a third method." Gurudev was fond of saying, "Take recourse to combination of methods." In olden days, there was only one medicine against malaria. Nowadays a combination of medicines is given. In old warfare only one weapon, arrow, Gada (mace) or spear was used by a warrior. Now it is not like that. Artillery, infantry, air-strike, naval bombarding, etc., all together. They do everything. In the same way, various methods may be combined. Suffice it to say that as you have to work out your own salvation and you have to uplift yourself by your own efforts, so you must be a Samyami, you must have your senses under control. You can keep your senses under control, only if the mind is under constant observation and scrutiny of the intellect. Only the intellect can have any influence on your mind, because both of them are inward. The intellect cannot only check the misbehaviour of the mind, but it can also correct the negative mood of the mind, such as sorrow, despair, depression, dejection, frustration. No outer help can be of much use. Your parents, Guru or a saint may be able to suggest to you some methods, but ultimately

the negative moods of the mind can be corrected only by your intellect. The intellect makes the mind understand through its discrimination, the futility, the wrongness and the error of allowing such moods to prevail. It is not going to do any good to you. On the contrary, it is going to make you still less capable of dealing with yourself. You have to snap yourself out of it by yourself and only the intellect can do so, provided you are willing to follow it. If the mind is disobedient and does not follow the intellect, the charioteer, then the chariot is heading towards disaster. So the mind must willingly accept the advice of the intellect.

In the beginning of the Gita Jnanopadesha, Arjuna was a hundred per cent total mind only, only feelings, emotions, sentiments, his own thoughts. He did not use his intellect. So Lord Krishna, the charioteer does the work of his intellect. He showed him how it was not proper for Arjuna to give way to the negative mood. He scolds Arjuna: कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् । 'Whence is this perilous strait come upon thee, this dejection which is unworthy of you, disgraceful...?' (B. Gita II-2) and then explains,

अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे ।
गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ।।

'You have grieved for those that should not be grieved for, yet you speak words of wisdom. The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead' (B.G. II-11). He also explains why it is so,

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ।।

'For, certain is death for the born and certain is birth for the dead; therefore, over the inevitable thou shouldst not grieve' (B.G. II-27). That which is inevitable, that which cannot be changed should not be grieved. It is no use wasting your nervous energy and emotional power over it.

You all know there is a very proper and correct prayer:

O Lord! Give me the courage and strength,
To alter that which can be altered.
O Lord! Give me the patience
To put up with that which cannot be altered.
O Lord! Give me the wisdom, discernment
and intelligence,
To see the difference between the two.

All this is the work of the intelligence. So, the same analogy which is given in Kathopanishad is repeated in Svetasvatara Upanishad and Srimad Bhagavad-Gita. Gurudev was constantly making us aware that we have to use our discrimination, our enquiry, our God-given gift of intelligence.

13

TAUGHT BY BEING

I talk to others on things which I have myself practised.

—Swami Sivananda.

There is a saying, 'Learn by doing, teach by being.' Gurudev taught us by both being and doing. He made himself an embodiment or personification of what he wanted us to be.

—Swami Chidananda.

Gurudev says, "Exercise of your commonsense is an important instrument of Yoga. You must use your commonsense at every stage." This was not merely an advice, it was a page from his own life. Whatever Gurudev has said about Samyama, discipline, training and inner culture was a direct page from his own life. He put himself to severest type of strict discipline. He was a very, very willing and obedient Sadhaka so far as the higher intellect was concerned. He never deviated from what his intellect guided him. He has said, "I am a self-made person, a self-made Yogi. No one was at my side to guide me at every step. I guided myself, by my own self-effort. I prayed to the Lord and drew strength from Him. Whatever Svadhyaya I did, I did it to apply in my life and not for passing the time. I put it into practice."

We were talking about the supreme Sadhana: Bear Insult. Bear Injury.—Highest Sadhana. I will give you a few instances of this supreme Sadhana from Gurudev's life.

Swami Paramanandaji was one of the most dedicated disciples of Gurudev. He was the person who almost sowed the seeds of the Divine Life Society. But he

was a man with a very terrible temper. So much so that everyone feared him, that is all I can say. Maj.-Gen. A.N. Sharma who belonged to the medical department of the Indian Army, used to refer to him as Prince Bismark. Before the World War-I, Prince Bismark was the Commander-In-Chief of Kaiser, the emperor of Germany. When anger went to his head, nothing could stop him, he would even forget with whom he was talking.

Once, a young man from Sri Lanka came to Ashram. He was sick, he had some bodily problem. Yet as he was a true aspirant, he came all the way from Sri Lanka. He was a University graduate. Swami Paramanandaji did not like highly educated people. He thought they had an ego of their own and ride a high horse. He was perhaps right, because Ashram life in those days was too hard for the elite. He used to say, "They must be cut to proper size." And as soon as they came, he did it in no time.

This lean youngster came walking a long distance. His feet were all blisters and his whole body was aching due to fatigue. He wanted a private interview with Gurudev, the second or third day after he came here. At that time, Swami Paramanandaji was very much in the scene in the Ashram. When the young man approached Swami Paramanandaji with his request, he flatly refused saying. "No, you cannot go and disturb Guru Maharaj." Perhaps someone might have said something unfavourable about this young man to him that he is a very persisting and obstinate person. That was enough to screw up Swami Paramanandaji. So he said, "Whatever you want to say, you tell it to me." The young man said, "I want to speak to Gurudev only. I want to talk something private." Swami Paramanandaji replied, "You can talk to me. I would do whatever is necessary."

This conversation took place outside the dispensary when Guru Maharaj was about to come. He was on his way. He had turned and entered the archway near the present post office. He was moving towards the Diamond

Jubilee Hall, his office. The young man persisted, "I will talk only to Gurudev, the President." And Swami Paramanandaji lost his temper and said very loudly, "I am the Pesident." Gurudev had already entered that room. If it was anyone else, he would have stepped in and said, "You keep quiet!" What Swami Paramanandaji said was enough to extremely annoy and irritate any other person who was in a position of Swami Paramanandaji's Guru. Because, one of the signs of active ego is its inability to tolerate the manifestation of any other ego in its presence. When Gurudev came, Swami Paramanandaji was shouting, "I am the President." I was not only listening but watching also. There was not a single ruffle in Gurudev's countenance. He was looking the same. He asked the young man, "What do you want to say?" Even then, Swami Paramanandaji intervened and said, "No Swamiji! I will talk with him!" So Gurudev called me ignoring Swami Paramanandaji and told me in Tamil, "Bring that man inside." So I took him inside Gurudev's office and everything was over. Om Shanti(hi), Shanti(hi), Shantihi.

I was nothing at that time. I was just a white dress Brahmachari. This incident was a real eye opener to me.

* * *

Even more unbelievable is another incident again involving the same Swami Paramanandaji. In the first week of April, 1953, he decided to call the Parliament of World Religions. Gurudev once inquired, "Who are the participants in this?" Swami Paramanandaji said, "No, no, Swamiji! I will take care of all that." Major-General A.N. Sharmaji was an important person at that time. He was a London-returned cardiologist and was on the top of his own department. He lived in the Defence Colony, Delhi, and had good contacts with most of the Embassies. So Swami Paramanandaji managed to get Buddhism represented by the Thai Embassy, Islam by Afghanistan Embassy and Christianity by some other Embassy. Some Mahamandaleshwars and local

distinguished people were also invited. The parliament was inaugurated by Sri C.P. Ramaswami Iyer.

At that time there was an institution called Atma-vijnana Bhavan run by Baba Kali Kamaliwala Trust at Ramnagar. A Swami residing there permanently was also invited. Except one or two speakers who spoke in Hindi, all read their papers or gave talks in English. Gurudev also spoke in English. English was the common language in this Parliament.

In the next session, it was the turn of this Ramnagar Swamiji to speak. His was a very stout, forceful and aggressive personality. He started thundering in Sanskrit and continued for ten to fifteen minutes. To make sure that all would understand, he afterwards switched over to Hindi. In his thundering, forceful speech, he outrightly abused Gurudev, left and right, in front of about a thousand distinguished people. He said, "It was utmost foolishness, a big blemish and an action contrary to Hindu religion and tradition for a Sannyasi staying in Uttarakhand, on the banks of holy Ganga to speak in a foreign, alien, polluted language."—Like that only. He did not speak on any religion nor even on any subject. It was a direct tirade against Gurudev. Gurudev was regarded with such high reverence by all that within a few minutes, the whole audience became restless and some of the invited Mahatmas were also scandalised by it. Some people from the audience even went in the wings of the stage and sent a word for Swami Paramanandaji and said, "Look! This speech must be stopped. If necessary, you should even call the police to remove this man from the stage forcibly. Or, cut off the microphone-connection." Swami Paramanandaji was fuming with anger, but Swami Narayanananda kept his cool and declared, "Nothing doing! Absolutely nothing! Gurudev will be very much displeased if you do anything like this." So they suggested, "When other Mahatmas speak later they should refute this Swami."

When that Swamiji had spent all his force panting and fuming he resumed his seat. Before anything could

be done, Guru Maharaj immediately got up, went to the microphone and said in Hindi, "We are most grateful, most thankful to the honoured Swamiji Maharaj for having told us the right thing indeed. Sanskrit is the Devabhasha, the divine language. There is no other language in the whole world to equal Sanskrit. Verily all the religious discussions should be in the Devabhasha. We congratulate him for his command over the Devabhasha. Hindi being the national language is next to Devabhasha in importance. His suggestion is indeed very, very correct and timely. We are most grateful to him for giving us this valuable advice." And he went on praising the Swami expressing gratitude and thanks.

It was, as though a fully inflated balloon was pricked by a pin. All the flight was taken out and this Swamiji was hanging in the air. He felt most discomfortable. He had expected some applause, some reaction. Both of these would have satisfied him. But nothing came. Instead, it had a judo-like effect, a fellow comes with full force to hit you and you just step aside and the charging fellow falls due to the force of his own vehemence.

I was on one side of the stage. The entire fifteen-twenty minutes that Swamiji was holding on, Gurudev's face was absolutely calm, absolutely serene, and there was not a single ripple or ruffle in his mind. If there had been any, it would have been impossible to hide it from making an appearance on the face. Impossible. No one can hide it. Gurudev was seated like a Buddha, completely serene and unperturbed. At that time, one felt that this is what Lord Krishna referred to, when he spoke of Sthitaprajna in Bagavad-Gita, Chapter-II.

There is a saying, Learn by doing. Teach by being. Gurudev taught us by both being and doing. If we are eager to learn, we should also learn by doing it. Then only, we will be walking in the footsteps of Gurudev, we will be trying to emulate what he wanted us to be. He made himself an embodiment or a personification of what he wanted us to be.

14

INIMITABLE WRITINGS

Swami Sivanandaji's books breathe the knowledge gained through personal experience. To read them is to feel that he writes what he knows. In his books he had tried to express in words, the beyond-words experiences of the soul.

—Sister Lalita Devi (Tapas Ashram).

He merely translates into language his inner spiritual vibration, energy and force, recording spiritual currents as they arise within himself.

—Sri. C.V. Narayana Iyer.

The style of Swami Sivananda reminds me of an English writer Bacon, who also made small and vigorous sentences full of depth and meaning. Like Bacon, everywhere his matter is close to his words and animates, governs and inspires the language.

—Prof. P.C. Mahendra, M.A., D.Litt.

Those who have come into discipleship of Guru Maharaj, or those who have not come into contact with him personally but have become much inspired and benefited by coming into contact with his wonderful spiritual literature are indeed a special chosen lot.

Gurudev's literature is simply wonderful. It is unique and stands in a class by itself. It has a certain power, a certain force, so much so that anyone who reads it, cannot but become transformed if he has even a little bit of receptivity. It is not merely scholarly or erudite treatises full of high philosophy, metaphysics or

theology, or theoretical and academic outpourings on some abstruse, subtle or abstract principles. There are many such very highly scholarly writings from world famous learned personalties. But they are so intricate that if a Sadhaka tries to get some meaning out of it, he will be lost in the maze of words, verbosity and intricacy. Though such writings may get the appreciation, applause and admiration of equally involved scholars, but a Sadhaka is left high and dry in the air.

Gurudev's writings are very simple like Mahatma Gandhi's writings. He used short sentences and no difficult, complicated words were used. Even a high school pupil can read and understand it. A Sadhaka has to read it once, and its meaning becomes totally clear. You have not to rack your brains about subtle meaning of words. Everything is very simple, very short, very lucid. So, one prominent personality of India has said, "Swami Sivananda's writings are to the spiritual world and to the world of ethical and moral living, what Mahatma Gandhi's writings were for the social and political field in pre-independence India." Many reviewers, journalists, great writers like Dewan Bahadur K.S. Ramaswami Shastriar, Sri Rajagopalachari have similarly proclaimed the simplicity, lucidity and effectiveness of Gurudev's writings. Sri Rajaji says, "Swami Sivananda's writings are lucid, clear and short." Gurudev himself has said about his writings in a very simple way, "This is my style of writing."

He did not merely write academic, theoretical or abstract treatises. What is more, he also wrote directly addressing the readers. Whatever he wrote was filled with the force of his personality and the power of his own penance, austerity and Realisation. Gurudev's writings were the outcome of his austerity, penance, deep meditation and Realisation. That was the peculiar quality of Gurudev's writings. They had a certain unique force that directly went into the heart of the reader. Two sentences were enough and the reader would become a

changed individual! They were direct, practical and most unconventional. He would be writing something, and suddenly after a paragraph, start speaking to the reader, "Blessed Atman!" or "Beloved Ram!" He came with a mission and that was always reflected in his writings.

Swami Vivekananda's works were from his thundering lectures from the platform. His speech was electrifying. It had force of his own Realisation. His tongue was simply Saraswati. It was impelled speech; it came spontaneously. It had the power to simply shake the audience and go to the very soul of the listener. His was a life of ceaseless wandering, touring and lecturing, touring and lecturing. It shattered his health completely and brought about his early death.

But Gurudev did not, at all have that type of exposure of touring and lecturing. Gurudev was the prophet of the pen, his written word is so powerful. In some measure his writings were like the words or sermons of Jesus Christ. Christ never spoke in long, involved sentences, but gave very brief teachings that have become immortal. Gurudev's writings were like that. No matter on what subject he wrote, it was practical, precise, to the point and directly appealing to the reader.

He summed up his message in those seven words: **Serve, Love, Meditate, Realise, Truthfulness, Chastity, Non-injury.** Truthfulness indicating honesty or integrity of character. Chastity indicating control over one's thoughts, sentiments, actions, senses; discipline and purity of thought, word and deed. Non-injury indicating compassion, a feeling heart, a helping hand, kindness, identification with the suffering and sorrows of others.

It is twenty-four years* since Gurudev attained Mahasamadhi. So direct disciples have been gradually diminishing. So a great majority of the followers of the

* *The discourse was given in 1987.*

Divine Life Society are of the second type of Gurudev's devotees, that is, devotees whose lives have been transformed by his teachings, who have received a new light by coming into contact with his writings. His writings have given a definite push to them in a new direction, altering the course of the previous life and turning it in the direction of the fulfilment of the *law of evolution* which is *the basic Will of God for men.* He sent the man on this earth so that he may utilise all his faculties and all the factors for steadily rising higher and higher towards the ultimate fulfilment of God's Plan, namely, attaining the Divine Perfection.

What is human life? Life is a steady, progressive ascent into Divine Perfection. This is the vision of the illumined sages and seers. When we are born here, we are far, far from being perfect; we have many imperfections, shortcomings. We are not aware of our Divinity. But we are not expected to remain in that state. On the contrary, we should make use of every factor, within and without, to ascend towards our Divine Destiny, which is going back into our original State which is our eternal ground, namely, God-consciousness. In that Divine State we were completely free from all the limiting adjuncts which have now given us this present body-bound finite human personality. That original State is non-distinct from the ultimate Principle or Existence or from the Nature of God. This is the essence of the movement of Divine Life. namely,

(a) Serve: making use of the activity of our physical frame in Karma Yoga of selfless service,

(b) Love: making use of the feelings, sentiments and emotions of the heart through Bhakti Yoga,

(c) Meditate: making use of the thought power of our mind through Maharshi Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga, and

(d) Realise: making use of the power of reasoning, analysing and logic, and the power of the discrimination of the intellect through the Jnana Yoga.

Thus Divine Life is making use of all of them singly or severally and taking the help of all the factors in our environment, whatever we have inherited from our parents, our surroundings and not failing to use the unparalleled rich treasure of Bharatavarsha that we have inherited from a great sublime past.

Looking at the present state of India and our society, many feel justified in the criticism, "Why unnecessarily talk about the past? What is the use of learning and praising the remote past and feeling glorified about it? Look to what our present conditions is." It is more than ever necessary today, than it might have been centuries ago to reiterate and recollect again and again the wondrous sublimity of our past. The Hindu Society in India today is in the present condition precisely because a living past, a dynamic living inheritance that is supposed to flow in our blood-stream, that is supposed to beat with our heartbeats, that is supposed to be a part of our life-breath, that is supposed to pulsate throughout our body and that is supposed to be translated in our lives has been ignored. Our that heritage, our that rich spiritual vision of life is very much a most relevant and most responsible thing of our life today, than ever before. Without realising this some people say we should live with the time. They take some sort of a historical and social view of our heritage and say it is a burden, a drag and it should be jettisoned. But this is a greatest blunder. We are reaping the bitter harvest of that blunder.

This heritage which Bharatavarsha evolved by the ancient sages and seers of the Upanishadic and Vedic era is of eternal validity. It was not for a particular period, century or millennium, but it is for all times. This

heritage of our sublime past is a heritage of the entire mankind, the humanity. Its scope is global. It is as valid, necessary and invaluable today, as it was thousands of years ago and it is going to be as valid, necessary and indispensable even ten thousand years hence.

Our society was blinded for a very long time by the glamour of the tinsel of Maya and the glamour of the gross, physical, materialistic world and the sudden advance and progress made in that field. Of course, it is to be appreciated and admired. If a dancer dances wonderfully, you have to admire it. But it is not going to be of any use to you, you should not forget that. There is no particular value in it for you, though it may be valuable to the artiste. All the materialistic things may have some value, importance and necessity; but even then in the ultimate context, it is mere husk, its value is cipher. Our sages warn us that if we are not cautious, it may turn to be iron shackles and chains to your feet, keeping you forever bound, and held a prisoner to the gross plane of a mere physical and sensual existence, and forever depriving you of the ultimate, great Divine Destiny for which you have come here upon this earth. Mind you! Apara-vidya has only a relative value and for the time being only. Even the highest advancements of science and the greatest progress in technology are of some utility to you, only so long you are living in this body form. They are of no use, once the body is discarded. The moment your last breath goes, their value is zero. This temporary utility of Apara-vidya is given too much importance to the detriment of attaining Para-vidya or spiritual Illumination, and you lose a golden chance which may not be given back to you, even if you regret.

Our sages, saints our Tattvavettas, our Brahma-jnanis, pious great men sounded a word of caution: Not all the wealth of the world has got any value, unless together with it, there is the Brahmajnana. In very simplistic terms Jagadguru Sankaracharya has said:

शरीरं सुरूपं तथा वा कलत्रं यशश्चारु चित्रं धनं मेरुतुल्यम् ।

गुरोरंघ्रिपद्मे मनश्चेन्न लग्नं ततः किम् ततः किम् ततः किम् ततः किम् ।।

'Even if you have a handsome body, beautiful wife, fame and greatness, Meru mountain like (immeasurable) wealth, but if you do not have the devotion to the feet of the Guru what is the use? What is the use? What is the use? What is the use?' (Gurvashtakam-1).

Gurudev used to say, "The wealth of the three worlds is mere husk if you do not have the Knowledge; if you do not have the right answers to the questions: *Who am I? Whence I come? Whither I go?*" This is the eternal mission of man who in essence is a divine being. Man is a temporary traveller on the earth and if he did not make this journey with wisdom and care, there is no greater blunder, no greater loss. Upanishads do not mince any matters and do not waste any words.

इह चेदवेदीदथ सत्यमस्ति न चेदिहावेदीन्महती विनष्टिः।

'If you attain It in this very body that is good; but if you fail to know It, great loss' (Kenopanishad II-5). So having come into this world, having attained the human birth, having attained good intellect and aspirations and a rich wisdom heritage of Bharatavarsha, if you fail to attain Self-realisation or the Goal of life in this very incarnation, there is no greater loss. It is a Himalayan blunder to have received all these and yet not to make use of them. Gurudev drew our attention precisely to this fact.

Therefore, the validity of our past lies in the fact that our present degenerate condition is due to having failed to recognise the importance and the value of our past rich, living heritage and having neglected and ignored it. We were brain-washed into thinking that they were all superstitious nonsense.

There was a temporary eclipse and Bharatavarsha is just emerging out of that eclipse. During the past hundred years, the light has started to come again. This emerging out of the temporary eclipse in our spiritual

history started from Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Swami Vivekananda and was carried out by Swami Ramatirtha, Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji, Sri Ramana Maharshi, Swami Ramadas, Sri Aurobindo. It is interesting to note that Swami Sivanandaji (born on 8-9-1887), Sri Aurobindo (15-8-1872), Sri Ramana Maharshi (22-12-1879), Swami Ramatirtha (1873), Papa Ramadas, Sri Anandamayee Maa (1896) and Mahatma Gandhi (2-10-1869), all these people were born in the same period, within a course of a decade or two. So, there came a resurgence of our spiritual culture. In that came the light for us who lived in darkness due to being blind to the spiritual purpose of human life as per our culture and heritage.

Those who had a direct encounter with Gurudev even for a day, an hour or a few minutes have gone with an impression that is unforgettable. Even if one had spent ten minutes in the presence of Gurudev, that vision will never go out, it will never be dimmed even after all these years. But for those who had no contact with him there are good many books and inspiring incidents of his life. So the value of these talks is precisely for those who belong to the second and the third category, that is, for those who having come into contact with Gurudev's teachings are benefited from it and become devoted, and for those who were brought into contact by others, who had come into contact with Gurudev's teachings and are benefited.

* * *

Yesterday, I narrated the incident of Gurudev's Buddha-like calmness and serenity in face of public insult and a tirade directed against him from the stage in front of a very intelligent audience in a Parliament organised by his own Ashram. That was something we have to see, in order to believe.

In that period, a number of disciples were very, very diligently taking down every incident of Gurudev's

day-to-day life from the time he came out of his Kutir till he went back into it again. Everything he did, everything he said was noted down.

From such notes during Gurudev's sixty-day All-India Tour, Swami Venkatesanandaji could bring out the big volumes of **Sivananda, Day-to-Day**. We left on the evening of September 8th after the birthday celebration and came back on November 8th morning. It was a hectic tour. Everything that Gurudev offered and all the programmes Gurudev fulfilled were terribly strenuous. Terrific! Terrific is the only word for it. The programme was unbelievably strenuous. How Gurudev could take it, God alone knows!

Swami Venkatesanandaji was one of Gurudev's right hand persons. When Gurudev had to go up the stairs or to come down the stairs, he had to take help of someone. It was either Swami Purushottam or Swami Venkatesanandaji. Swami Paramanandaji never approached Gurudev. He was always in the background. He will be ten metres ahead or he will be behind. So Swami Venkatesanandaji had the duty of being by the side of Gurudev. The moment Gurudev went up the dais and sat, Swami Venkatesanandaji started working. Many a time, we reached a camp in the morning and had a hectic programme throughout the day and left in the night. Sometimes, if the train timing was very early in the morning, we slept on the platform, because it was gruelling hot when we started from here. Everywhere the bogie was detached and put into a siding. Sometimes, the siding had no platform. When Gurudev had to get down or board it, it was brought to the platform. But, if we had any work in the bogie, we went even to the siding and did the work.

Swami Venkatesanandaji had to take down the notes rapidly and he had to type it also, so that the work won't accumulate. So what that wonderful man was doing? He was taking down shorthand notes throughout

the day and when the train started in the night and when everyone went to bed, he would start typing! He would go to the bathroom, close the toilet seat and put his typewriter on it and would sit on a little crate or box putting a little pillow over it. There were many crates full of books. He would work the whole night! Once a week, he mailed all the typed manuscripts to the Ashram. Swami Krishnanandaji was here in the Ashram. He would go through the manuscript and give it to the Vijnan Press. Within a few weeks, after Gurudev returned to the Ashram, the book was ready!

There is a unique feature about Gurudev's writings. Everything he wrote, every sentence of it was within the range of his own personal experience, physical, mental, spiritual, whatever. He has written only those things which he himself had put into practice and experienced. He must have experienced it at some stage or other of his own life, may be as a student in Thanjavur or as a doctor in Malaysia or during the days of intense penance in Swargashram or in his later life after coming over to this side of Holy Gangaji.

Gurudev was an eternal learner. Gurudev used to say, "I am ever a student. I don't feel any humiliation in learning from others. I keep on learning from eminent scholars, elder people and even from children. I am like a talent scout, I always keep my eyes and ears open so that I can learn more. If I see anything good, immediately I record it as I want to give it to the whole world all that is good. If I see anything worth emulating, I put it into practice immediately." As Gurudev was an eternal learner, his life was full of adventure, ever progressing and this is reflected in his writings making them invaluable.

15

EFFACEMENT OF EGO

It is well to remember that Sattva, Rajas and Tamas have their own hooks that keep the Sadhaka back and prevent him from soaring into the realms transcendental. The Sattvic hook is the most subtle of all and therefore most difficult to discern and detect. With Sannyasa floats the Sannyasa Abhiman, with Tyaga creeps in Tyaga Abhiman—most subtle and most dangerous almost impossible to get over.

—Swami Sivananda.

I have been trying to explain to you why Gurudev has said, *Bear Insult. Bear Injury.—Highest Sadhana.* Why he has said so? It is extremely difficult to bear insult and accusations. Everyone has self-respect, a subtle form of ego, that would not allow you to bear insult, and that ego is our greatest enemy separating us from God. It is the wall between us and Him. So long as this wall is not completely shattered, annihilated, we would be on one side of the wall and God would remain on the other side; and we would not be able to attain Him, we will not have His glimpse. Whether it is Advaita Vedanta or Bhakti Marga or any other thinking, all emphasise this point. Whether it is Christianity, Islam, Buddhism or any other religion or any saint who has plunged himself deeply into spiritualism and mysticism, all recognise this basic truth that Sadhana cannot be complete without complete annihilation, complete dissolution of ego.

There are three abodes of ego:

1) *The gross or the Tamasic ego*: It is completely demoniacal and makes the person always thinking and

doing in negative way. It always keeps the person far from the Lord and from the divine qualities of peace and joy. He himself becomes the cause of all his miseries and sorrows as he plunges into the sensual pleasures only. He is always restless, always complaining. His life is full of unhappiness.

2) *The Rajasic ego*: It is due to delusion and attachment with the material world. The person becomes blind to reason, discrimination and the Goal of the life on account of his involvement in the worldly things, his bondages and 'my and mine' attitude. He is not as unhappy as the gross ego person. But he too loses the right path due to delusion. The result is he creates more and more Karma-bandhana and plunges deeper and deeper into the bog of Samsara and into the wilderness of the cycle of birth and death. So the ultimate outcome is the same as of Tamasic ego. Both are equally bad in the sense that both keep us away from our divine Destiny. In this sense, there is not much to choose between the two.

3) *The subtle or Sattvic ego*: This is desirable and helpful in the early advent on the spiritual path, for the simple reason that it keeps us out of the Tamasic and Rajasic egos and their consequences, and puts us onto the right, the spiritual path. It is a good ground to start spiritual Sadhana. But howsoever Sattvic or subtle it becomes, it is the ego principle and it remains so. So, so long as even the most subtle ego exists, one cannot have God-realisation, the Divine Experience. Selflessness, compassion and sympathy for others are the foundations of the subtle ego. It may be in the form of, 'God is my father and All-in-all. Everything belongs to Him only. Nothing is mine. I should serve Him in all His Forms. The entire world is His creation, His form. So I should do service to others, I should do Paropakara.'

So, the subtle ego sows the seeds of Shubhechha. Thus it is helping the Sattvic person in putting onto the path of knowledge. It makes his life Dharmic, ethical,

pure. So it is not only a necessary prelude to the spiritual life, but it is also helpful in brining us out of the Dehadhyasa. In this way, the Sattvic ego is uplifting and sublimating one's life and is considered very beneficial. However from the point of view of Vedanta Darshan it is undesirable after a certain point. A mystic has given it an analogy of a golden cage. Though it is pure gold, very valuable, it remains a cage. Some mystics use the analogy of the three types of handcuffs—iron, silver and gold. The gold handcuffs look very beautiful, yet they remain handcuffs. So, for the ultimate Experience, the Sattvic ego is also to be transcended.

Guru Maharaj has analysed the ego principle in a wonderful way in his writings. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Dev was not well educated, but he explains it in a very, very simple but telling way:

In olden times, a traveller was passing through a thick forest. Three dacoits attacked him and snatched away all his wealth and made him captive. One dacoit said, "We should kill him." The second dacoit protested, "We could get so much wealth from him, that is enough. Why kill him and invite trouble? We should tie him with a tree and run away. So that we can enjoy all his wealth." So, all the three tied him tightly to a tree and went away.

After a while, the third thief parted from the other two. As it started becoming dark he started thinking, 'I should save that traveller from his bondage. Otherwise any wild animal may kill him. He is tied with the tree and is totally helpless.' So he went back and freed the traveller from his bondage. Now the thief thought that they had taken the traveller in such a deep jungle that unless he showed him the way, the traveller would be lost in the wilderness of the jungle. So he took the traveller by a short-cut route, out of the wilderness and said, "Look there! That is your abode, your home. Now you proceed on by yourself." The traveller said, "I cannot go alone. You must accompany me. You have been so

much kind and helpful to me. I want to give you a reward." But the thief explained, "No, no. I cannot come there. Now onwards you have to proceed by yourself without my company."

Sri Ramakrishna Dev explains: The first dacoit is Tamoguna. It is destructive, it always thinks negatively and harms others unnecessarily. The second dacoit is Rajoguna which binds the Jivatma, the traveller, to the tree of Samsara and sensual pleasures. You are no more able to move towards your Abode, your Destination. It may not destroy you spiritually, but will hold you bound to the material world with Maya. The third thief is Sattvaguna. It shows the right track and puts the traveller Jivatma on the right path, shows him his Destination, takes him near the ultimate Reality. So far it is very, very helpful. But it cannot take you any farther.

Ultimately, you have to become Trigunatita, you have to transcend all the three attributes; till that you cannot have God-realisation. However, it is the Sattvaguna which brings you near that so you should take refuge in Sattvaguna to become firmly rooted into the spiritual ascent. But Sattvaguna is also one of the three Gunas; So unless you transcend that too, you cannot have the ultimate Experience. However, most of the Sadhakas need not worry about that very, very high state; because Sattvaguna can take you upto Savikalpa Samadhi, it can take you upto the eighth stage of Navavidha Bhakti, that is, Sravanam, Kirtanam, Smaranam, Archanam, Vandanam, Padasevanam, Dasyam and Sakhyam. Only for the ultimate stage of Atma-nivedanam, one has to give up even the helping hand of the Sattvaguna. Thus Sattvaguna is indeed of a great help. It is a great thing to bring you right upto the threshold of Illumination. It is necessary to get help of Sattvaguna for this ascent. Guru Maharaj says, "The complete annihilation of ego is possible only after a very, very intense and atom-bomb-like powerful Sadhana. So, go to the place where you are not respected but you are

humiliated, abused and insulted. Deliberately go to the place where people are likely to make fun of you. Bear all the insults calmly."

Erasing the ego totally is a long, long process requiring an all-out effort. Guru Maharaj has said, "*Give up Brahmin, Sannyasa Abhiman.*" Give up the ego of being a Brahmin or a Sannyasin. Guru Maharaj's Sadhana in this direction was simply unique. He touched the feet of even all the Grihasthi devotees. Sri Ramakrishna Dev and many other saints have also consciously and deliberately made special efforts like this.

On the Swargashram side, there lived a famous saint Swami Narayana Paramahamsa who was known as Bori Narayan Swami or Gunnybag sage. He wore only one underwear of coarse gunnybag. No other clothes. All his belongings were a time-piece alarm and a Yoga-danda. Nothing else. In winter, he slept on straw spread on the ground and then covered himself with a gunny-bag. He had no Guru except Sri Badri Narayana Bhagavan Himself. Bhagavan came in his dream and gave him the Mantra-diksha, the initiation. In his pre-monastic life, he was a judge in Uttar Pradesh. A doctor soon becomes aware of all the terrible pains and sufferings that exist in the world. Likewise, a judge very soon becomes aware of all the dirtiness, selfishness, untruth, dishonesty, wickedness, crookedness and evils of human life. So, if they are sensitive, both a doctor and a judge would be disgusted with all the human society. He being a judge, he had to deal with murderers, cheaters, dishonest people, wicked people, evil people, twisters, etc.

While sitting on the bench, he saw only Adharma, non-righteousness, being poured forth in their arguments. He was aware that everything they were speaking was absolute falsehood. The witnesses also uttered falsehood. This was a painful experience for a

sensitive soul. He got some spiritual awakening. He gradually became disgusted with the terrible nature of human life and started reading spiritual books and turned to meditation and prayer. He became a Sadhaka and did spiritual Sadhana even when he was in service. He gave up his service and came to some pilgrim place on the banks of holy Ganga. As a judge he was a very, very big person. A peon was always going ahead of him and a clerk by his side. No one could approach him. He was accustomed to being always respected, honoured and served. Now that he had taken the extreme step of complete renunciation and entered the Nivrritti Marga with a begging bowl, the problem started. He did not know how to beg, he had never asked for anything before. Not a word could come out of his mouth for begging and he started remaining hungry. A Sadhu advised him to take certain rice-like seeds of a wild plant and to boil them and eat them so that he would be free from hunger. The judge followed this method to avoid the necessity of begging. One day, two days, three days, the hunger left him completely. But on the fourth day he could not get up. He had no hunger, but he had no strength either. His head began to reel. This dimension of the remedy he had not anticipated. That forced him to start begging. He would stand before some house and make some noise when the house wife came out, he stretched his hands and would get some food.

He was a very intelligent man. He thought to himself. "Why this happened to me like this? I must have still got that notion that I am a judge, I must be still clinging to the old I. I am not feeling hundred per cent that I am a Sadhu, a Bhikshu. I am still having that ego that I was a judge. I must remove it. How to remove it?" So he must have pondered over it well and he hit upon a plan. The pilgrim place that he was living in, was a settlement of Sadhus and on certain days pilgrims used to take the Ganga-bath. He used to go to the Ghat very early in the morning and station himself there. When the

pilgrims came for bath, he would prostrate himself completely at their feet in dust. 1,2,3,... 30,... 40,... 50,... he went on doing *Sashtanga Dandavat Namaskaras* to all the pilgrims returning after their bath. People were taken aback, a Sannyasi doing such complete prostrations to ordinary Grihasthis! But after sometime, they became accustomed to this. They might have thought, 'He is doing Prayaschitta of some big sins committed in the past.' So, afterwards, they took him for granted and did not try to avoid him. In this way he completely got rid of the feelings that he was a judge or something.

Gurudev has said about him, "He is keeping up the very ancient tradition of the forest dwelling Rishis and Munis whose description we find in Srimad Bhagavatam and other Puranas. Now they are a fast vanishing tribe. We have to be grateful that in our Sadhu Samaj we have a person of his kind, his nature." He had observed Mauna for about twenty years. When he was persuaded to break his Mauna, he could not speak. His vocal-chords had become inactive. He was Gurudev's companion in those days.

I had had the good fortune of going to him and seeing him. Due to too much exposure to cold and all that, he had inflammation of eyes and he was not taking any medicine at all. Some devotees informed Gurudev and he asked me to go to the Swamiji and see him. The moment I told Sri Narayana Swamiji that Guru Maharaj had sent me, he was overjoyed and said, "Ah!"

16

SERENITY OF MIND

Having had the honour of sitting at his lotus feet for over twenty years, I have no hesitation whatsoever in saying that no one has ever seen him disturbed, angry or upset. He is always calm, cool and collected at all times, open-hearted and full of bubbling joy.

—Maj.-Gen. Dr. A.N. Sharma.

In those days, there were hardly ten people in the Ashram. Swami Nijabodhanandaji, Swami Narayanananda ji, Swami Purnabodhendraji were in the Ashram. But not even Swami Paramanandaji* was in the Ashram at that time. Some of the early disciples of Gurudev, like our Swami Nilakanthanandaji, were from Kashmir, because Gurudev had visited those parts earlier. There was a young man Sri Kaul who was influenced by Gurudev's teachings and came to the Ashram. He was a post-graduate.

There was a young man, Brahmachari Vishweshwar Chaitanya serving Gurudev. He had a sandow-like body, short, square but very muscular. He had a very wonderful physique and was an expert in Yogasanas, Surya-namaskaras and physical culture. He was a non-matric typist in some office in Calcutta when he came across Gurudev's *Sure Ways for Success in Life and God-Realisation* and he was inspired and came to the Ashram.

Gurudev entrusted this young Sadhaka Kaul to Brahmachari Vishweshwar Chaitanya. This

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* *Though he was the live-wire of the Divine Life Society, he was away from the Ashram from October 1942 to 1946.*

Brahmachari was so very well conversant with Gurudev's teachings that he had pages and pages of Gurudev's writings completely by heart. He did all the typing of Gurudev and acknowledged receipts of the donations received and would include one paragraph of Gurudev's instructions too, so Kaul was struck with admiration for him.

Over some months, a gradual change started taking place in the Brahmachari's nature. If Kaul approached Gurudev after the Satsanga and asked any question or got his doubts cleared, or if approached Gurudev for instructions, this Brahmachari did not like it. He resented the Kashmiri approaching Gurudev! He would say, "When I am here why should you go to Gurudev?" No one noticed this transformation. It was going on inside like the glowing ember covered by ash. This was going on for several months.

I don't know what Lila it is! One evening Gurudev, as usual, came for a round. Myself, Swami Krishnanandaji (Sr.) and some other persons were chatting in front of the present post office. It was twilight and became semi-dark. We knew that Gurudev would be coming now, so we were respectfully standing outside to have his Darshan. It was summer. We saw a swinging lantern, the signal of Gurudev coming. But we heard some very unusual high pitch voice. We were puzzled, what was happening! As Gurudev started coming nearer and nearer and reached the road approaching us, we heard the voice in the highest pitch, very angry, very furious and saying something non-stop, God knows what! Gurudev was walking as usual, and the person who was raging and shouting walked behind him. When they came near Ramashram Dharmasala we were stunned and tongue-tied seeing the party. It was Br. Vishweshwar, the wrestler, coming with Gurudev's lantern. Gurudev was silent and very, very serious in his countenance. The Brahmachari was raging at Gurudev at the very top of his voice, "Who are you to instruct him?

Why should you instruct him? Am I not here?" The Kashmiri was tailing behind saying, "Vishweshwar Swamiji! Gurudev is my Guru." The Brahmachari shouted, "I am your Guru. You should take instructions only from me." The post-graduate had left everything for Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and here was a man saying, "Where is the necessity of going and asking him?" Br. Vishweshwar was completely off his proper senses.

In this situation, all the three came near the office. The secretary came out of the office very, very angry. He inquired, "What is this Swamiji Maharaj?" Gurudev calmly replied, "Ask him." The secretary was a very intelligent person and a few words from the Brahmachari had already reached his ears. He sized up the situation and went to the raging man, took away the lantern from his hand and said, "You may go now. I will escort Gurudev. I will talk to you later on." So he took over the charge and escorted Gurudev to his Kutir. Even while Gurudev was being taken to his Kutir, the Brahmachari was raging at the top of his voice. We were wondering, 'How such a thing can ever happen?'

The next day, the secretary told the Brahmachari, "You may take to some other department. You need not go to Gurudev's Kutir." From that day onwards, his going to Gurudev's Kutir stopped. After a few weeks he went to see Gurudev for seeking permission to go to Sri Badrinath. Gurudev did not take any offence or had any displeasure at all. But he warned him as a Sadhaka, "Look here! If you don't control your temper, one day you may commit a murder." This made Br. Vishweshwar break down and cry. He was afraid because whatever came from Gurudev's mouth used to become true. He started crying like a child before Gurudev. So Gurudev said. "No, no, no. I am not telling you that that will happen. I simply advised you to get rid of anger, somehow or the other. All the murders are due to fits of anger. Anger is demonic. Anger leads one to hell.

Therefore, you should control your anger. You have my blessings. Go to Sri Badrinath and come back." Gurudev gave some money and other useful things. He went on foot to Sri Badrinath and stayed there for many months till the temple was closed. When he came back to the Ashram, he was a totally changed person, there was a very peculiar transformation. He was a Hathayogi and Vedantin. There was a complete metamorphosis. After coming back from Sri Badrinath he became a Sankirtanist, just like Chaitanya Mahaprabhuji's transformation. He had a very strong physique and wore turban. "Narayana! Narayana!", he used to chant, sing and dance for hours, sometimes even tears rolling from his eyes. And this was a complete transformation. Later he became well-known and people called him Mahapurusha or Jivanmukta Maharaj.

This incident was something very strange and wonderful. His own disciple who was supposed to regard Gurudev as 'Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwara', berated Gurudev right and left with a towering rage, and yet Gurudev did not utter a single word! Gurudev was absolutely serene! If there had been anyone else in his place, he would have taken a club and given him a blow.

This is how Gurudev taught us. He taught us what a Sannyasin should be, what a saint should be. He was not only a sage but a real saint. He was a living Sthitaprajna. He had a mind which nothing could shake. Nothing could cause even a ripple or ruffle in his mind! An extraordinary mind!.

Now I shall tell you what type of heart Gurudev had and why he was known as a saint.

17

EMBODIMENT OF LOVE, KINDNESS, COMPASSION

Swami Sivanandaji is all heart from head to feet. —*Swami Suddhananda Bharati.*

A saint's heart is as soft as butter. But butter melts at its own sufferings, while a saint's heart melts at the sufferings of others.

—Goswami Tulasidas.

Divinity and unselfishness can be attained only by Sarvatma Bhava. Go to Ananda Kutir, you can see embodiment of this Sarvatma Bhava. There is the great master of Knowledge. His love and modesty have no bounds because they are derived from real Sarvatma Bhava.

—Swami Tapovanji Maharaj.

Now, we will come to a little suspected aspect of Gurudev's personality. He was totally detached to the world. There was no mind for it. For him there was no institution, no Ashram, no disciple, nothing at all. Gurudev's Ashram, his institution and all that is what we thought about. What was inside his mind is a secret. Rarely he let out what was his inner state, suddenly by some utterances. I was not unsettled or shocked by it. I understood it a hundred per cent what his inner state was. But many people who could not understand it, wondered why he founded the institution, the Ashram and why he brought them on such a big scale, took so much interest in them, in their working and yet why he did not make any provision about how they should be run afterwards. But if there were any institutions existing for him, then only he would make any provision

for it! Provision for their functioning, but where? In this world? But the world had no existence for him! If you think that the world existed for him, you have not understood your Guru at all. He was established in a state of Consciousness wherein for all the three periods of time, there is no existence of the world! No existence in all the three periods! That was Gurudev, the true Vedantin. Very, very rare to come across a person established in that state of Consciousness! Sri Ramana Maharshi was cent per cent in that State. Sri Maa Anandamayee and Papa Ramdas also.

Gurudev was absolutely Anasakta, he was a super Nirmohi. There was no sense of I or mine regarding anything of the world including his own body. That was the most wonderful and marvellous aspect we witnessed day after day, day after day. Although he was always in that State, seemingly he took interest in small things, in minutest details. This is only a Lila. These people are incomprehensible, imponderable. Ordinary people cannot understand them. They are such mixture of extreme contradictions that people cannot understand them, cannot grasp them with their limited knowledge and understanding. Though they may be very, very particular about the minutest details and all that, they remain in the State where the world does not exist. One may wonder why did they put on the show of taking so much interest! My first answer is they do not put on any show. It is only our thinking that they took interest and that they are self-contradictory, they are inconsistent, they have accumulated. Mahatma Gandhiji was also charged of inconsistency, of changing or altering his views. Most people think that such accusation and allegation of inconsistency and self-contradiction have some truth, some validity. At that time, I also thought like that. At that time, I viewed the situation in a fragmented way, limited way. But now in the light of greater knowledge and better understanding, I find there is no inconsistency and nothing wrong in changing the

views. This is the law: With greater knowledge and deeper understanding views do change after a passage of time. In the same way, there was inconsistency or contradiction in Gurudev's behaviour.

Gurudev's consciousness was upon a certain level and it was always upon that level. Even when it appeared to function at a lower level, it did not function so. Parasakti expresses herself through such saints. They are such wonderful channels, instruments for the play of Parasakti that She expresses Herself for the benefit of all. Gurudev has told us repeatedly that after having attained that state of Cosmic Consciousness, their will and God's Will are no different, they are always identical. God's Will is their will and their will is consummate and identical with God's Will. So it is God's Will, the Divine Will expressing in and through physical and mental activities of such personalities. If we try to evaluate their actions with the instrument of Yoga standards, we can find no contradiction, nothing at all. But if you apply the same standards that you apply to evaluate worldly activities of ordinary people, you will be doing injustice to them and you will be on the wrong, not they.

Gurudev was absolutely Anasakta, Nirlipta and a super Nirmohi. There was no sense of I or mine in him regarding anything including his body. That was the most marvellous and wonderful demonstration which was witnessed by us who were in constant contact with him day and night, observing his actions in so many fields of activities. They revealed themselves in greater and fuller details, and obviously in greater depth also. Many things which I don't know about Gurudev is known to Swami Satchidanandaji. We could know Gurudev's life and actions only when he came out of his Kutir, or when he called us in, but that was very rare. His Kutir life was known to his posterior Sevak. The price he paid for this good fortune was such that you or I cannot dream of paying in this life. There were times when Swami Satchidanandaji did not sleep all the twenty-four hours.

In order to be at the beck and call of Gurudev at anytime, he had given up eating cooked food, so that he would not feel drowsy. He subsisted only upon fruits and raw vegetables. He never lay down and slept. He used to sleep in the night leaning against a wall, sitting on the floor. The moment Gurudev called him, he was always there. Because of this almost impossible price, they know certain details about Gurudev that none else could know. But we could gather certain things from them.

When Gurudev came out of his Kutir, may be he did 30-40 different activities in one or one and half hour. But once he entered his Kutir he used to say: नाऽहं न त्वं दफ्तर गुम् । 'Neither I exist nor you exist, all the activities vanished!'* Then how could he take interest in people and in the worldly activities in spite of his absolute Anasakti, absolute Virakti, absolute Nirliptatva, absolute Nirmohatva? Here comes the play of Divinity. Some say, God has no care, He does not even know at all. In the vastness of illimitable, boundless infinitude of the Cosmic Reality in which infinite millions of universes come, remain and go. That is as infinitesimal small an activity as something happening like a particle of spray thrown up on the surface by a broken wave in the middle of the Pacific Ocean! How can it affect the Pacific Ocean? Can it be aware of this happening? So also would be the effect of infinite millions of universes coming, existing or going, on the Cosmic Reality. What would happen if a drop of water is dropped in the middle of the Pacific Ocean is what is happening in the Nature in the form of a phenomenon of countless millions of universes or galaxies arising, subsisting and subsidising! Would you expect the Pacific Ocean to be aware of that drop? You cannot charge-sheet the Pacific Ocean for this. So as well, He is aware of His boundless Vastness and

* *Gurudev expressed the Upanishadic truth* न त्वं नाहं न चान्यद्वा सर्वं ब्रह्मैव केवलम् । *'Neither I, nor You, nor any other thing exists; all is only Brahman' (Tejobindu Up. VI-4) in his inimitable simple way and ever remained in that Consciousness.*

immeasurable depth only. Beyond that he is not aware of anything else. Yet He Is Kripasindhu, Dayanidhi, Karunasagar. *That Vastness is Itself infinite Love, That Vastness is Itself boundless Grace, That Vastness is Itself immeasurable Compassion.* It has not to have to make any effort to put forth these qualities. It inheres in Perfection, in Divinity.

The great sage of Arunachalam, Sri Ramana Maharshi, very significantly, corrected a person who begged the Maharshi to pray the Lord for His Grace and Blessings so that he can make some spiritual progress. The Maharshi looked at him and said, "Why do you want to pray to God for His Blessings? Do you not realise that God is nothing except Grace? You have not to ask for His Grace. God is Grace."

God is Grace just as sun is brilliance, effulgence, radiance. *Divinity means Compassion, Love, Concern.* This has been demonstrated in Gurudev's life any number of times. We can draw parallels also.

This was during his early days on this bank. There were people who were more fortunate than this speaker, in the sense that they were residing here in Muni-ki-reti even prior to Gurudev's crossing over from Swargashram and settling down on this side towards the end of 1934. There was an Ayurvedic dispensary, next to the police station. Its name was Tehri Durbar Vanaspati Karyalaya. The Vaidya was a Brahmin known as Sri Vishnuduttaji. He had studied not only the Ayurveda but also Sanskrit and Vedanta. He was a disciple of Shad-Darshanacharya Sri Swami Raghavacharyaji Maharaj, the founder of Adarsha Darshan Mahavidyalaya. People knew him as Shastriji Maharaj. Shastriji's family was Gurudev's immediate neighbours. There were some other neighbours also. All the children of these families were Gurudev's playmates! He even played marbles with them! If they were playing when he happened to come out, he would also join them in playing. He was like that

right from the beginning. Shastriji's son Suman and Tabla player Uttamji's younger brother Vishnu who was working in our printing press, were always playing around the Kutir. Sometimes these children took liberties with Gurudev which we cannot even think of. They even shared jokes with him. When it was very hot inside the Kutir, Gurudev used to sit outside on the bank of Gangaji in an easy chair. The younger kids used to get on his body and play! They regarded and loved him more than even their own father and mother. If their parents tried to correct them they would not care. So the father would come to Gurudev and request him, "Please tell something to them, they listen to you only." Whatever Gurudev would tell them, they would do accordingly. They had so much love for him. They knew Gurudev would never scold them, he would not hurt even a fly or an insect. He did not allow anyone even to pick up a stone just to frighten the monkeys. Perhaps they were so much afraid of losing his affection that they never did anything that would displease him. They would not feel their life full unless they saw Gurudev daily.

Once, Gurudev was in his Kutir. In those days the bridge between the police station and the Kutir was a very small one, just enough wide for a small bus to pass through. Even the Nalla* was very narrow. Gargi, the youngest daughter of Shastriji was crossing the bridge coming from the side of her house, and at the same time, a bull was crossing from the opposite side. Somehow, the bull got annoyed, gave a big snort and tossed the tiny little child into the Nalla. The elder sister started screaming. Someone got down into the Nalla and brought the child up. There was one injury from the bull's horn and several other injuries and scratches due to the fall. She was semiconscious only. The child was taken to her father. He was in depress and did not know what to do. He simply said, "Take her immediately to

* *A culvert, gorge or ravine. This one was not very deep at that time.*

Swamiji." Someone ran to the Kutir and told Gurudev that Gargi was tossed into the Nalla by a bull and is injured. Gurudev was so full of anxiety and concern, one should have seen his face to believe it. He immediately took his stick and came out of the Kutir. The father was rushing towards the Kutir with the child in his hands. When he was on the bridge, he saw Gurudev coming. He cried, "Look Swamiji! Gargi is serious!" And he put the child in Gurudev's arms. And Gurudev was in tears! One just can't imagine his concern for the child.

Everyone knows him as a tower of strength. He was absolutely impervious to, and imperturbable by petty sentiments. All his life he had to console the people in distress when they came to him crying and narrated their agonies and sorrows. He was the person to whom people brought their griefs, sorrows, tragedies, heart-aches, and he had to go on listening to them, giving them solace, consoling them, telling them, "Don't worry you will be soon all right. Do Kirtan in Vishvanath temple, join the Akhanda Kirtan of the Mahamantra, take bath in Ganga, sit by the side of Ganga and do Japa, stay in the Ashram for sometime..." The person who had as a part of his very life listening to griefs and sorrows of all people and console them, when he confronted with that sight, he was in tears! We also could not believe it. I can never forget that. Only then I understood what a heart this big, towering personality had! He took the unconscious child in his arms and immediately brought her to the dispensary and gave the necessary treatment and a little dose of stimulant and the child regained consciousness. He told the parents, "Oh! Nothing has happened. Tomorrow, Gargi would be playing and running around." And the child recovered completely in three, four days. The outer treatment was only a pretext. As soon as the child came in his arms, she was beyond all the possible danger.

This is the paradox of the great ones for whom the world does not exist at all. They are established in the

highest state of consciousness, but at the same time, when Divinity chooses to manifest through them, they come to the human level of living and acting and the Divinity inherent in them, finds expression in human nature of the most sublime and loftiest kind. They are embodiment of love, kindness and compassion. They are love incarnate. Therefore, a large number of his disciples regard him not only as their Guru but also as their mother. There was no trace of masculinity in him. He was not only a sage but also a saint of divine compassion. What is the nature of a saint's heart? A saint's heart is as soft as butter but with the difference that butter melts at its own suffering, whereas a saint's heart melts at the suffering of others. This was an incident to which I was an eyewitness.

* * *

Do you know how Swami Akhilandeshwari Mataji came into contact with Gurudev? Her husband was having a good job. He came on Sri Badrinath Yatra when Gurudev was staying in Swargashram. When he came back from Sri Badrinath, he contacted hill diarrhoea. He became ill. When he reached Rishikesh, he was not in a position to continue the journey. Someone brought him to a Dharmasala belonging to the Kali Kamaliwala Trust because they had a very big Ayurvedic dispensary. He passed away in that Dharmasala. To find the identity of the person, they searched his belongings and found about Rs. 1200/- and some letters in English and Tamil. At that time, that was a lot of money. As the deceased person was a South Indian, the Swamiji in-charge of the dispensary sent for Gurudev so as to trace the address of the deceased. Gurudev went there immediately, found out the name and address of the person and arranged for proper cremation of the body. He deposited the money and wrote to the wife of the deceased person about the sad demise and informed that if some person comes with proper identification, the money will be handed over to him. Her uncle was a judge. He arranged to send a man

with a letter of identification and Gurudev handed over the money to him.

That lady wanted to see the place where her husband breathed the last, and also wanted to have Darshan of the Doctor Swami who was so very good, helpful and kind. Several months later, she could persuade someone to take her to Rishikesh. But they did not know anything about Rishikesh,—what kind of place it might be, whether it would be a safe place to live there, what kind of accommodation and arrangement there might be. So he first took her to Varanasi and stayed there for a few days. But she persistently pestered the person to take her to Rishikesh and to the Doctor Swami. So at last, he brought her to Rishikesh and inquired about the Doctor Swamiji and found that Dr. Sivanandaji was living in Swargashram and not in Rishikesh. So they brought her to Swargashram. When she came to Gurudev and introduced her as the wife of that person, Gurudev immediately recognised her and so she broke down and cried very much. But at three o'clock Gurudev said, "Now you must go." In all the twenty four hours, Gurudev used to receive people between 4 and 5 p.m. only. He used to keep a board at the entrance of the compound, "Interview between 4 and 5 p.m. only. Only for five minutes at a time." So that was the only time he was available. Usually Sannyasis came to him for guidance, and when Sannyasis come a lady should not remain present. So Gurudev asked her to go back. But she pleaded that she needed Gurudev's solace and Satsanga. So Gurudev allowed her to come daily, provided she stays in Rishikesh and leave Swargashram Kutir before three in the afternoon.

She had good money. So she made arrangement for her stay in Rishikesh. She was an orthodox lady. She used to cook all her food by herself only. From the next day onwards, she used to finish her cooking and other work by nine o'clock in the morning and whatever she had prepared, she would take it all with some pickles and

curd also and she used to come to Muni-ki-reti, cross Ganga by boat and come to the place where Gurudev was living. But the Kutir would be locked. So she would sit outside under a tree patiently. She narrated her story thus :

> As soon as I came near Gurudev's Kutir all my sorrow and grief vanished and I was at peace. I used to go there daily and do Japa, Kirtan sitting under a tree. At midday, Gurudev came out to fetch water from the Ganga. Seeing him, I immediately got up and requested him to take some food I had prepared myself and brought with me. Gurudev said, 'Well! As you have prepared it yourself, I would take it.' Gurudev also accepted pickles and curd from me. So for three weeks, I followed the same routine. I once requested Gurudev for initiation into Sannyasa, but Gurudev said, "No, now you go back home. God has fixed His own time for everything."

* * *

Another unforgettable instance. In 1929, a South Indian couple who came here for Sri Badrinath Yatra visited Gurudev. In 1946, a family came for Gurudev's Darshan and were waiting in his office. The mother was a typical orthodox South Indian widow. Her son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren were with her. When Gurudev came to the office, the office team was waiting for him with so many papers to sign. So he was busy for some time and did not look towards the family. But as soon as he finished the work, all of them got up and prostrated before him. When he saw them, he immediately recognised the mother and told her, "Oh! you are coming after so many years." And the lady burst into tears and started crying. When the last time she saw Gurudev, she was in a Saubhagyavati state with hair and Kumkum on the forehead, proper sari and all the ornaments. Now she looked totally different. Her head was completely shaven like a Sannyasin, she wore a

simple borderless white sari, nothing on the forehead, not a single grain of ornament on her body. Though Gurudev was seeing her after so many years, he immediately recognised her! She could not believe it and she was so much overwhelmed that she burst into tears.

* * *

So this was Gurudev! There are also some funny lights of Gurudev's Karmayoga.

Gurudev knew that a senior inmate of the Ashram was a chain-smoker. So Gurudev had told the purchase-in-charge secretly to provide him his monthly requirements and to keep this secret. You know in "The Song of Govinda", Gurudev tells that tobacco is poisonous and very bad and should be given up. Why he provided smoking quota in this case? Because, he found that it was impossible for this devotee to give it up. He maintained that smoking should be given up*. But his understanding was deep enough to appreciate the mental state and agony of this long time addict; and he was large-hearted enough to treat equally well even those who could not follow his advice and norms. Gurudev's Karmayoga covered not only sick, suffering and the downtrodden but it also extended beyond that area.

There was a Sadhu in Bhajangarh. As Gurudev had stayed a few months there soon after reaching Rishikesh, he knew Gurudev. He used to visit Gurudev occasionally. When he came, we were not allowed to interfere. He knew well Gurudev's schedule and office hours. He would come to the office and offer a flower or a lemon to Gurudev. After the usual formalities, Gurudev would motion to his attendant and tell him a code word. So he would put his hand in his bag and would extend it

* *"Even if there is some bad habit like that of tea, coffee and smoking, I allow them to continue their ways for some time. When they attain mental purity and will-power, all evil habits drop by themselves. The mysterious influence of the Ashram atmosphere has its own effect also."—Autobiography of Swami Sivananda.*

tight-fisted to Gurudev and Gurudev would also give some thing tight-fisted saying, "Give me your hand, Swamiji." And thus the tight-fisted transaction would be over. The visiting Sadhu would say, 'Thank you', and go away. Once an old Swamiji told Gurudev, "Swamiji! You are giving him some money and he will spend it on drinking and will scandalise you. He says, 'Our Ashram is not an Ashram in real sense. There is nothing like Dharma here. There are many persons of other religions in our Ashram...' Like that he criticises you at your back." Gurudev simply said, "Yes, I know everything. He will follow his Dharma, I will follow my Dharma." This was his goodness, sympathy, understanding. This was his Karmayoga.

* * *

Sometimes, his Karmayoga took the form of certain actions that left us completely bewildered. In those days the Ashram was very small. Everyone knew everything of everyone else. It was concentrated mainly downstairs only. The upper portion of Ashram gained some importance in winter only. In winter the Satsanga was held in the Bhajan Hall. One Sadhu came to stay in the Ashram for sometime. He was from South India. He said, "I have come on pilgrimage. I know Vedas and scriptures..." Gurudev gave him permission to stay and he was accommodated in Ramashram Dharmasala which was our main accommodation for visitors and guests in those days. It was next to the office. They always kept available to our Ashram one room and one hall. That room was given to this Sadhu. He stayed there for nearly a month.

One day, Brahmachari Vishweshwara Chaitanya complained his blanket was missing. He always used to carry it with him as he used to teach to do Yogasanas. He asked everyone; all were searching for it. After a couple of days, Gurudev sent Prasad to that old Sadhu to his Ramashram room through this Brahmachari. When he

knocked the door, the old Sadhu was not there. As the door was not locked, he pushed it open to put the Prasad inside the room. He saw the missing blanket was lying under the pillow. He was outraged. He kept the Prasad, took the blanket and came to Gurudev and said, "Swamiji, I have found the thief." And he narrated his story. Gurudev said, "No, no, no! What have you done! Go, go, go quickly. Keep it as it was. O fool! What have you done! Go put it back immediately. If he comes and finds out it is missing what will he think?" The Brahmachari was stunned! He was holding his own blanket which was lost and now found, and yet he himself had to put it back so that the feelings and self-respect of the old Sadhu, the thief is not hurt! But it was Gurudev's wish. So he sheepishly went, kept the blanket where it was, put the pillow on it, closed the door and came back to Gurudev. Gurudev warned him, "Don't utter a single word about this to any one. That Sadhu should never learn about this. You go and get another blanket for you."

So that is another dimension of how he served the people, no matter what they did.

* * *

There was a visiting couple. When the lady had gone for holy bath in Ganga, she saw a girl standing in the river in a suspicious condition. She seemed to be in a state of despair. When the visiting lady approached her, the girl tried to avoid her in the beginning but afterwards started weeping and gave out her story. She had come here to commit suicide because she was expecting a baby although she was unmarried. The visitor talked to her sympathetically and explained her that suicide is a big sin. She persuaded the girl to come with her. She told the story of the girl to a senior Swamiji. So they brought the girl to Gurudev in his office and told about her privately. Gurudev took her to his Kutir and asked her what she wanted to do. As she broke down saying, she had

committed a blunder, Gurudev consoled her saying, "Look my child. Nothing wrong has happened. You stay here in the Ashram and everything will be all right." In those days a single lady was not allowed to stay in the Ashram. Yet this girl was given permission to stay and was given a room beside an elderly couple. She was looked after properly and in due course she delivered a child.

There was a childless couple, great devotees and frequent visitors to the Ashram. When they came after this and came to see Gurudev, Gurudev sent someone to bring the child and said, "Oji! God has sent a child for you!" They happily adopted the child. The girl was sent back home. So, she was saved and her honour was also safeguarded and protected. The childless couple got a child and the child got a family and protection. But if you start thinking of it and assess it with your normal worldly standard, your narrow yardstick of morality, you may not approve it. But Gurudev's service to the society sometimes went beyond the concept of right and wrong. Such was his depth of understanding, nobility, compassion and concern for others.

There are many such instances which reveal such marvellous softness of his heart on account of which he was not only unable to bear and see the suffering of others but also was keen to avoid causing the least bit of suffering to others. It was spontaneous, it was his nature. Though he was a highest Vedantin, in his heart he had the softness of a Bhakta, his heart was ever full of love and compassion for others. His life was what he preached: Be Good. Do Good. Be kind. Be Compassionate.

दया धर्म का मूल है पाप मूल अभिमान ।
तुलसी दया न छाँडिये जब लग घट में प्रान ।।

'The foundation of Dharma is kindness, of sins the ego. (So) Tulasidas says don't leave kindness till your last breath.'

18

INEXPLICABLE WAYS

World is a mere appearance.
It is like a snake in the rope,
Water in the mirage, blue in the sky.
World is a mental creation,
There is no world for a sage.

—Swami Sivananda.

He fully understood that this outer Divine manifestation in the form of this solid seeming world had a definite purpose behind it, because it is the outcome of Divine Will and the Supreme Ishwar is its Creator. So the outer world, transitory and short-lived as it is, could not be neglected. He having attained full spiritual illumination, did not turn away from this world but tried to serve and improve it as best as he could.

—Dr. Mohammed Hafiz Syed, M.A., Ph.D., D. Lit.

Wonderful are the ways of those who are established in a state of Experience, where the world to them is both a reality as well as an unreality. They are conscious of both the aspects seemingly contradictory of a certain phenomenon or a situation and yet they are able to function perfectly within the framework of each one of these two aspects, themselves being above and beyond both the aspects. They know that there is only One Existence, not two, not many and the world is no other than Brahman. At the same time they are aware that for each and everyone of the seemingly many that make up this outer appearances, the world is real. They know, for the millions who come to them, the world is the only solid reality and there is no reality beyond it.

How to understand this particular state of such great ones? Is there any method? Well, let us try an interesting method of trying to understand it. But, it will depend entirely on your power of imagination, your ability to visualise and enter into a particular state, which will require a lot of absolute calmness of mind, absolute concentration, total inwardness, a reflection and contemplation within, without any distraction.

Here is the method. You imagine a person going to bed and falling asleep. He sinks into deep sleep and starts dreaming, and sometimes he wakes up. This cycle goes on without any fixed pattern for all of us. Sometimes dreams are fragmentary and sporadic. Sometimes, dreams come in a regular form, from the start to the finish. Imagine this one is a fairly lengthy and continuous dream. There also seems to be some sequence in it.

Now comes the difficult portion. You imagine this man is starting to have a continuity in his dream, day after day. The same dream personalities appear again and again and the actions also continue, as if there is a logical continuation or a follow through of what happened in the previous night dream. He does not pay much attention for a few days in the beginning. But day after day, there are the same people and even the same events are progressing in continuation with perfect precision. Then something deep inside him clicks and starts working, "This is altogether another world. When it is continuing so very logically, persistently, I should not forget this dream world and the dream characters."

So an automatic mechanism starts functioning and he is able to remember vividly each and every aspect of the dream, who came, who spoke what, what happened. When it becomes a daily phenomenon, he starts even anticipating them and suddenly one day, he is in the middle of the dream observing everything. But still he is quite aware, "All this is a dream only. All these figures are

only dream-figures. When I am in waking consciousness, they disappear. But for them all this is real. They even don't know that for me it is merely a dream. For them all the characters and events are actual and very much real. They have their own worries and anxieties, their plans." Thus he enters into their joys and sorrows, their anxieties and worries, their fears and future plans, and all that. He is able to appreciate their viewpoint and feelings fully and yet he is aware that this is not real. So this is the state.

You stretch your imagination to visualise a State where the dreamer is fully aware that the experience that is unfolding in front of him is a dream, it has no ultimate reality. At the same time he knows that everyone who is a part of that dream is totally unaware of this being a dream. The dream state of him is the waking state for them. For them everything is real.

How do you sum up this experience? He knows it is unreal, a false experience. He also knows that it is real for those who are within that framework of that false experience, the dream. When he is in the waking state all of them disappear and in the sleeping state the dream will continue.

Suddenly, that dream takes the form of a big Satsanga like this. After the talk is over, a question period is announced. Someone asks a question and this speaker gives an answer. These questions and answers are very deep, very philosophical. So, the next day when he wakes up, he writes down them. One day, in the dream, the question asked by a dream character is, "What is the value of what takes place in the dream? What is the validity of the people appearing in the dream? Do they have an independent existence? Do they exist at all? If they do not exist how could one vividly remember them? How could one gather knowledge and wisdom from the conversation that takes place in a dream?"

Very clear and lucid answers are given to these intricate questions. They are now in the possession of the dreamer, so he is all the ears to know the answer. It is a fascinating thing. This experience did occur to someone and has brought it out all into a book. It gives us a glimpse into the extraordinary or supernormal state of the consciousness of a person who knows a thing to be false but at the same time is fully aware that those who make up that false set-up are not aware that it is false for them it is completely real.

Gurudev was established in the lofty State o Consciousness and started the work of sharing the Light with the whole world. Subsequent events that took place here, put before us the extraordinary blend of absolute Consciousness, as well as relative consciousness. This world is false and unreal, not in the sense that it is non-existent but in the sense that it did not have an existence before, nor will it have afterwards. It is a temporary appearance projected for the time being only. It has a beginning and an end. It is real only in the relation to the here and now. In the present time continuum and the present space framework, it is. But in the time and space context, it did not exist a little while before and we know for certain that it will not exist after sometime. For example, we are observing Gurudev's Birth Centenary, but none of us will be here to celebrate his second birth centenary in the year 2087. So it is a relative reality existing only for the time being and for the people concerned. Even though, the stage may be there and the play may go on, but the actors come and go within this framework. For the actors it is a relative reality.

On one hand, Gurudev is unaffected by wars, tragedies, accidents, calamities. At the same time, when some mother who has lost her child comes and weeps, before him, he is moved and he also sheds tears. He consoles the person with so many soft and soothing words, and does so much reasoning trying to make her

understand that death is inevitable and inevitable should not be grieved. He is full of compassion, full of kindness. Both these contradictory aspects are seen in him at the same time. On one hand, absolutely in Advaitic consciousness सुखदुःखे समेकृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ । 'Having made pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat the same' (B.G. II-37), he remains unaffected. But at the same time, on the other hand, he is deeply moved, he is the most compassionate and full of sympathy for others. *He feels the sorrows of other persons as a subjective experience of himself* with the experience of others. This is very inexplicable.

It is fascinating to see different facets of beloved and worshipful Guru Maharaja Swami Sivanandaji in this context. I will narrate an incident, a story in which a glimpse of this extraordinary aspect of Gurudev is seen, and to this day, the actual implication of it, I have never been able to understand properly.

I related to you the incident of a little girl called Gargi being thrown over the parapet of a culvert and injured and then being brought to Gurudev. These children became motherless. Their mother was a very hard-working lady of the hilly region. She was a typical Indian woman, forbearing, suffering everything silently, never complaining and working day and night for her husband and children. She had four children. She became ill and in spite of the best efforts of her husband, Sri Vishnudutta Shastri to treat her through Ayurveda therapy and in spite of Gurudev's efforts, she passed away in 1944. In those days, this area was in a native state and there was no recourse to Haridwar and Dehra Dun doctors. Also, it was a very difficult time, many of the doctors were on the war front.

I knew this lady very well. She was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu. She used to say frequently, "O Badri Vishal, Deendayal!" And during her illness this was always upon her lips. Shastriji was a very carefree man.

He cared very little for the family. The lady had to carry the whole burden of the family. She handled the money, the household and everything. She was both, the mother and the father to the children. Shastriji remained fully immersed in making his Ayurvedic medicines and was not accustomed to take seriously the burden of the family and the household matters. Shastriji had also learnt psychosomatics through Ayurveda and used to say, "One of the causes of illness is dejection and sorrow, so always be cheerful, keep your mind in a happy state, and openly laugh at least five times a day." He laughed so loudly that if he laughed in his Vanaspati Karyalaya, we could hear it here. He did not require any reason or cause for his laughter. He would suddenly burst into a loud laughter at any time, even during serious conversation also. He would talk and laugh. He was a chain-chewer of betel leaf. Though he was just past the middle age, he looked absolutely winced like an old, old person. His face was full of wrinkles.

Shastriji came to Gurudev. He was a very stingy man. He told Gurudev, "Swamiji! What to do? The children have become motherless. I don't know cooking and all the children are very young." He expressed sorrow and so Gurudev consoled him, "Shastriji! Why do you worry? God will look after your children. Be at ease. You go back to your home. I will send food for you and your children with someone." At that time, the Ashram kitchen was near the present post office and food was prepared for only 10-15 persons*. Would you believe, the entire meals of the family were sent from the Ashram kitchen and they had not to come to take it! For six months Gurudev sent everything till the eldest daughter Kamala learnt cooking and started to cook.

The funny part of it is this. Soon after his wife's passing away, all the friends of Shastriji started persuading him to marry again, arguing that there

* *There was acute shortage of manpower and money. All the work was done by the Sannyasis and Sadhakas themselves.*

should be someone to look after the young children. So he came and told Gurudev, "All the people press me for marriage as I am not accustomed to cooking and looking after the household and the children. What should I do?" Gurudev after a long silence, said, "Shastriji! Your difficulties are genuine, but they would not last long. God has arranged everything for you. When you ask me, my reply is: Enough! Enough is enough! Don't go for a second marriage." Shastriji argued, "The children are young and need a mother. Who will cook for all of us? How shall I be able to run the household?..." Gurudev replied, "As you wish. But if you are seeking my advice, I would suggest you, not to go in for a second marriage."

I don't know what extraordinary feelings were there within Gurudev towards those children. That evening when the children were coming from the school, he sent someone to call the children. When they came to Gurudev's Kutir, he sent away the servant with the instruction, "Don't allow anyone to disturb me."

Gurudev told the children, "Look! If your father ever broaches the subject of marrying again to you or anyone else, all of you must say, 'No, no, no. We don't want a new mother,' as soon as the subject comes up. If they scold you and ask you to keep quiet, all of you start crying. And remember, don't tell this to anyone." And Gurudev taught them to say, 'We don't want a second mother.' Gurudev asked them several times, if they understood everything well.

After some time, some of Shastriji's friends came with a marriage proposal and the children happened to be there. The eldest boy was quite very intelligent for his age. He asked his father what did they talk about. The father said, "They are telling that the children should be properly looked after by a new mother." The boy immediately stamped his foot and said, "No. We don't want a new mother." The visitors tried to convince him that the father is very busy with his patients and work

and has to remain away from home for most of the time, so the children must be looked after properly by a new mother. Hearing this, the boy started whimpering and the other three children also joined him whimpering and crying.

This continued for a few months. Shastriji was not allowed to discuss or even mention this topic at all. They used to cry loudly and so passers-by would also notice the scene. Once the father became very angry and asked, "Why are you doing this? Who told you that a new mother is bad?" The youngest son spoke out, "Gurudev has told us to do so." By that time, their crying had become real, they had not to act any more. The moment anyone talked about a new mother, they would automatically start crying really. Shastriji became so angry, he cursed Gurudev and called all sort of names for him, saying, "What does he know? He has no wife, no family, no household to run. I am suffering here. How I would run the household?" He even started talking very badly about Gurudev to his friends and others also. But he had no option, because the eldest son had threatened, "If a step-mother comes in the house, all of us would run away." So, Shastriji could not marry again and remained a widower all his life.

Years later, Shastriji himself told me, "Swamiji! If Gurudev had not tutored the children like that, who knows what would have been my misfortune? At that time, I was very angry with Gurudev but look, all the children are properly grown up and are happy. Now I realise that I should be ever grateful to Gurudev. In the beginning, I did find some difficulty in looking after the children and controlling them and the household affairs. But all of them are wonderful. Now they so much care for me! They look after me so well. God knows, what would have happened if another woman had come in our life and if she had her children and there would have been quarrels among the children, and these very good children would have been ill-treated by her, and all that.

It was God who spoke through Gurudev and saved me and my children. I don't know what would have been my plight otherwise."

Perhaps, this was out of sympathy for the children and Gurudev's concern that they should not suffer if Shastriji get into a wedlock. Gurudev knew that Shastriji was not a person capable of running the family and would have left everything to the new woman.

This Kevala Advaita Vedantin of Sankara Parampara, a sage and Sannyasi was able to enter into the inner feelings of a family, what the children would have to undergo if a step-mother came in, and perhaps he visualised and saw what would have been in store for this Shastriji, if he had taken the foolish step of remarrying. When Gurudev found that he was not receptive to his advice of not marrying again, he screwed up the children. For some years Shastriji was very hard on Gurudev, but ultimately he realised the wisdom of it and told Gurudev, "Swamiji, You have saved me and my children. I don't know what would have been our fate if I had remarried."

This is some extraordinary way, some inexplicable way of his action. From one state, he thundered addressing the Sadhakas and seekers, Jagat Kalpana Jiva Kalpana (This world is a dream, nothing exists, all this is dream.) And from another state, Gurudev was able to be so sensitive to this unreal, dream people, people in a relative reality, a dream world, a continuous dream only, that he was able to enter into their experience and do the right thing for them within the framework of their state of consciousness, their realm of consciousness.

Whatever he did, he did it in such a way that it never in any way altered his permanent State of absolute Consciousness. Therefore, whenever he uttered any Vedantic truth, it directly appealed to our heart. It was not like a teacher telling something from a text-book. Gurudev knew what he was saying, he knew what he was

saying. Therefore every single sentence from his lips had a force and impact.

* * *

These were the experiences we know staying right here. There were people who stayed in the Ashram for some time or who met him and had some interesting experiences. Here is something from Sri N.K. Srivastava. First, I will narrate to you the peculiar circumstances responsible for his stay in the Ashram for three years.

Sri Nanda Kishore Srivastava hailed from Arrah in Bihar. He was a lecturer in philosophy and was an extraordinarily intelligent man. He was very fluent in English and was very good in mathematics and other subjects also. He was the only son (or perhaps he had a brother) of parents who had seven daughters. He had first Darshan of Gurudev in 1940. Possibly he had contact of Gurudev through his books earlier too. Soon after his visit, he and all his sisters were regular visitors of the Ashram and attended both the Easter and Christmas Sadhana Weeks also.

A very rich Jew, Mr. Shamash came to India in a very distressing circumstances. He had married an American lady, Liliane who came in contact with some spiritual institution. Somehow or other, may be due to some mistake of hers, she had a very bad experience in the course of her Sadhana. She became mentally very weak. She began to hear voices, to see evil things and was gripped with fear. She could not recognise anyone, not even her husband or children. She stopped talking. She became blank and was not giving any response to anyone or anything. It was a very bad psychotic condition. The husband tried to make available the best treatment, but there was absolutely no improvement. The husband became a distraught and distressed man. So when someone suggested him to go to India and try Yoga treatment, he came with his wife and two daughters to India and went to Sri Ramana Maharshi. He was very

much impressed by the Maharshi and his philosophy. But there was no arrangement for giving her treatment there in Tiruvannamalai, and ladies were not allowed to stay in the Ashram. They had to reside outside the Ashram. Some people there suggested he should better take her to Dr. Sivananda.

Thus, the family came here in the year 1944. She was such a loving mother and good wife that he was willing to stay as long as required to make his wife normal. He had no dogmatic notion about staying here. He was willing to do anything for getting his wife well and was even willing to stay here permanently.

At that time, there were not many inmates in the Ashram. So they were given two rooms. In those days there were no bathroom or lavatory. So toilets were specially constructed for them.

After a day or two, the family came for Gurudev's Darshan. As soon as the family came to Gurudev and sat before him, she was perfectly all right. Gurudev asked her some questions inquiring about her health, her Sadhana activities, experiences, etc. She answered them like a normal person, as if nothing was wrong with her. She started talking with her children with warmth, love and smile. She took interest in her husband and talked with him also. As long as she was in Gurudev's presence she was normal. But after they came back to their room, she was back to square one. She was unable to recognise anyone and would not give any response at all. She seemed no better. However, her husband was convinced that whatever may be wrong with her, it can be overcome and cured by Gurudev's presence only. So he begged Gurudev, "Please allow us to sit in your presence as long as possible and when you are inside the Kutir, please allow us to sit on the open platform also." Gurudev saw the miserable conditions of the children and this man and his worry, anxiety and concern for the lady and gave them a latitude which was never given to anyone before.

Gurudev used to be available to visitors three times a day, during the morning and evening office hours and during the night Satsanga. The only thought for this man was how can he and his wife remain present before Gurudev and he was not losing a single chance. They used to be present all the three times. When Gurudev came for the evening walk and inspection of the work-in-progress, he would go to their room and greet them. As soon as, Gurudev would enter their room, the lady would become perfectly normal. The man was very much moved and became deeply devoted.

As his anxiety about his wife became less, he started worrying about the education of the children. At that time there was no English Medium school in Rishikesh and the children were playing all the day with the monkeys or strolling along the banks of Gangaji. So we tried to get a tutor for the girls but there was no suitable teacher with fluency in English. At that time, when Sri Srivastava came to Ashram for attending the Sadhana Week, Gurudev asked him to stay in the Ashram and become a tutor of the girls. Mr. Shamash compensated the loss of salary income of that brilliant lecturer. Thus, for three years Nanda Kishore stayed in the Ashram and he was not assigned any other work.

That family then settled in California and the lady was completely free from her troubles and lived a normal life. But the man turned into an absolute Vedantin saying. 'I am not this body' and started neglecting his body. Later he came to Swami Shuddhananda Bharati's Ashram in South and passed away there.

* * *

Now let us view the reminiscences of that scholarly intellectual Sri Nanda Kishore Srivastava.

The scientific method of observation is limited to the objects of the senses and the intellect. It is, yet, too imperfect to be applicable to the transcendental facts. Still, the miracles of a saint must be reported objectively,

whence in themselves the miracles have a pragmatic value. Honesty and fairness to the scientific world demands that the miracles should be reported in the lifetime of the saint, so that if there is any doubting Thomas among the authorities of the scientific research, he may have an opportunity of contacting the saint and verifying himself/herself the saint's power of performing miracles.

What is a miracle? It is not an illusion of magic created by anyone. It is a saint's mysterious ability to approach God and persuade Him to include in the programme of Nature, that which the saint or his devotees and followers consider unselfishly desirable for the good of humanity—this includes individual, collective or even cosmic good.

When I first met Swami Sivananda in 1940, the problem of marriage was agitating in my mind. He guessed it. He kept mum over it for over two years. A year before my marriage, he sent me his Ashirvad (benediction) that I was going to be married. It was a surprise for me, for I had nearly given up the idea of marriage and that there was no proposal for marriage at that time.

At that time, my youngest sister Miss Meena Srivastava (now Mrs. Sinha) had a peculiar type of facial eczema. The more it was treated, the worse it became. The doctors were totally outwitted. We brought her to Swamiji. First he tried to put me off by suggesting names of some big doctors in Delhi. But my mother and all my sisters, who became afterwards great devotees of Swamiji, fell at his feet as a last refuge. He chanted Rama Nama. He gave some ointment to apply. In a few days she was radically cured. For her beauty of face and happy marriage, she owes a debt of gratitude to Swamiji which neither she, nor her husband, brother and sisters can ever pay.

My father fell seriously ill while we were staying in Gopal Kutir, Rishikesh. He despaired of his own life. I rushed to Swamiji for medicines. Without even hearing my account of my father's ailments, Swamiji gave me four powders. He told me to take Lord's Prasad without worrying about the illness of my father. The powder brought my father round.

My sister Shyama, a blessed disciple of Swamiji went to Patna and started preaching gospels of Swamiji. When a woman came to her and begged that a son may be born to her. In an ecstatic mood Shyama gave her a Mantra and blessed her in Swamiji's name. Shyama immediately afterwards wrote to Swamiji to support her in this presumptuous act of hers. Swamiji wrote her back saying that her blessings had already been substantiated. In due course the woman had a beautiful baby boy.

In 1944, I paid a casual visit to Rishikesh. I went to Swamiji to pay my respect. Of his own accord, he told me that I was going to fall seriously ill in a few months time. I was taken aback by his words. But instantly, he assured me that I will also be well after the illness. The prophecy was fulfilled. He also predicted that I was not going to stay for long at Surajpura. This also came true.

Sir Rajira Ranjan Prasad Sinha, the President of Legislative council of Bihar fell seriously ill. I had talked many times to him about the glories of Swamiji. In a moment of despair he sent for me. He asked me to make a personal request to Swamiji to save him. I did so and Swamiji reacted immediately. His life was saved for a few years more for which he was ever thankful to Swamiji.

The Raja of Khallikota* had fallen in the eyes of the British on account of his burning patriotism. He saw a very noble refuge** in Swamiji. He and his Rani lived an admirable saintly life when I met them in Varanasi later

* *A small native state in Orissa.*

** *He stayed in the Ashram for about a year and did Chardham Yatra.*

on. To my surprise, Swamiji's blessings saved him from the prosecution of the British Imperialism. He never forgot Swamiji*.

When I met Swamiji for the first time in 1940, I did not believe in the reality of meditation. I thought it was either a dream or a wishful thinking, illusion or hallucination. But he asked me to meditate for some hours on that day. It was the first day of the first Sadhana Week. The very first day, I saw Swamiji laughing in my meditation. I tallied this experience with similar experiences of my sisters in their meditation the very same day and the hour.

* *He later took Sannyasa and was known as Swami Vidyanandaji.*

19

SELFLESS SERVICE

THE FOUNDATION OF SPIRITUAL ASCENT

In that Virakta Bhava also he wanted to serve others. See his burning love and sympathy towards sick and helpless.

—Swami Tapovanji Maharaj.

To serve people and to share what I have is my inborn nature, I spent all my energy and time in relieving human suffering by serving the poor and the sick day and night with a sympathetic heart. This kind of selfless service gave me purification of heart and mind and led me to spiritual path.

I take immense delight in service, service has elevated me. Service has purified me. This body is meant for service. I live to serve everyone and make the whole world happy.

—Swami Sivananda.

Some Sadhakas have not seen Gurudev, but their parents have seen Gurudev, got initiation from him and are or were his disciples. These Sadhakas were born after Gurudev attained the Mahasamadhi. But that they have seen the father and mother worshipping Gurudev's picture daily without fail and they come to Rishikesh on Guru Purnima, Sadhana Week, Gurudev's birthday, so the children become devoted to Gurudev. Not knowing him, one cannot have devotion for him. But those whose parents have come into contact of Gurudev and have become deeply devoted to him and because Gurudev's picture was in their home and worshipped by the parents, they have also become devoted.

But there are some seekers whose parents have neither seen Gurudev nor they have visited India, nor they know anything about Gurudev or India. But this generation is caught by the wave of spiritual revival which we were witnessing all over the world. Well-educated people are thinking deeply, they are exercising their intelligence. They have studied history or seen films/telefilms of our recent past on the horrors of the Nazis, the concentration camps, massacre of Jews and the cruelty of people during the World Wars. All these make them sit up and think, "My God! What horrible people the preceding generations must have been! They were brutal, barbarians, dehumanised. They pounded beautiful cities into power-killing of lakhs of innocent civilian people."

So the younger generation, all over the world, revolted against the acts of violence. Innumerable people turned to East and to Buddhism because it preaches peace. A whole new peace philosophy, a peace approach to life, a peace generation grew up in Japan and they were the people who suffered the most due to the Wars. In west, they rejected the Church because the Church blessed the troops and the clergyman offered prayers when the troops went into action. So the Western people say, "We want Jesus and His teachings, but not the Church." Many call themselves as Jesus people but not Christians. They offer flowers and ask for love and peace. They turned to Japanese and Indian teachers, they turned to anyone who preached the way of love and peace, goodness and kindness. By that time, Gurudev sent us everywhere and Gurudev's teachings had spread everywhere, thanks to Swami Vishnudevanandaji, Yogiraj Swami Satchidanandaji and many others. They went to those people who wanted peace, prayer, meditation. So these people came into contact with Gurudev's teachings and became the followers of Gurudev, although not knowing him. They may not have

devotion for him, but they are inspired by his teachings, they follow his teachings.

So, the present generation consists of disciples, devotees, followers and admirers. Gurudev has brought into their lives, the message of Vedas, Vedanta, the scriptures, the message of the Indian Culture.

Our scriptures have given to us the concept of Purushartha Chatushtaya, the four objectives for which every human being should strive, make efforts and should try to attain. The highest and the ultimate objective, the supreme Goal of life is Self-realisation, God-experience in which one has to attain the Liberation. All the material things and wealth that a man might have gathered will have to be left behind at the time of death. Nothing will come with him. All these are relevant or useful only so long as one is a traveller on this earth plane in a human body form. But their usefulness is not permanent or eternal. At the end of life, they are totally useless. Anything here has no ultimate value or meaning. You have come here and you will have to go one day. Your stay on this earth plane is temporary, you do not belong to it. You really belong to supramundane plane of spiritual Existence. That is the ultimate and the innermost Reality of your being. So our Parama Purushartha, the ultimate objective is the Experience of that plane. It is also known as Moksha Samrajya Prapti, attaining the Kingdom of Liberation. You have to attain it in this very life itself. Your thoughts, actions and your relation to other beings on this earth plane can be a help and can become an effective process of bringing you to that great Goal, provided your life is clean and pure, noble and sublime, so that only good comes to others from your life, no one is harmed, no pain or injury is inflicted upon others, you are always a source of happiness to others. Such a life by itself becomes partially a process to attain that supreme Goal. When you engage yourself in specific scientific methods and practices, such a life becomes a great helping factor, a

proper framework and environment. In such a life, you can follow the other scientific methods and practices that are specifically meant to give you the supreme Experience, Illumination or God-experience.

They have given certain norms and rules, do's and don'ts for your living so that you can engage yourself in this life in various Sadhana practices, like Sravana, Manana, Nididhyasana (listening to the scriptures, constant thinking and reflection on the eternal verities, and profound and deep meditation), Bhakti, meditation or whatever it is. Your life should not be inimical to your scientific practices, but should be conducive and positively helpful so that it becomes complementary and supplementary process of removing all the obstacles speedily and your life does not become a chain or a bondage.

Our ancient sages have given a framework of such a life. The first and fundamental objective which should be the basis, the foundation of your ascent towards the Goal is, certain basic principle and ideals, a certain fundamental knowledge of how you should live your life, how it should be, how you ought to be. Whether your life is going to become an obstacle on that path or a helping process depends upon this fundamental aspect of human life. This is the primary objective. Your life should not be coming in the way of attaining the supreme Goal and not actively militating against your efforts and becoming a hindrance. So they made the first objective as a life based on ethical idealism, Dharma, morality. You are expected to build up your life, day by day, month after month, year after year for the future upon this foundation, this basis. Your remaining life should be a link, a path between these basic fundamental values and the ultimate, supreme, spiritual Goal of Divine Perfection, Illumination, Self- Realisation, God-Realisation, Atmajnana (Self-know- ledge), or the direct Experience—Aparokshanubhuti. Everything else should be within this. The foundation of morality and

Dharma and the ultimate Goal should always be kept in your mind, and your life should be directed towards that ultimate Goal of spiritual Enlightenment, which the great ones like Upanishadic saints, sages and Siddhas and Gautam Buddha had attained.

You have to carry on your normal worldly life in order to have food, shelter and clothing. You may follow some profession for earning livelihood. That becomes inevitable. That is your normal, outer life. You may even fulfil your desires, provided their fulfilment does not take you away from your path, it does not become an obstacle in your Goal of Self-Realisation. How to see that your normal worldly life does not become an obstacle and bondage and will not hold you bound down? That is secured by seeing that it does not go contrary to the norms of morality and ethical principles laid down by the scriptures and saints for your guidance. If you want success in your life and if you wisely want to achieve your highest welfare, you have to adopt certain basic ethical principles for your own life. So far as your worldly life would not go in contradiction with morality or ethical idealism, everything will be all right. But if this basic value is ignored, your worldly life would deprive you of attainment of the supreme Goal.

Our ancient sages have given the fourfold objectives of Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha, that is, righteous living, earning, gratification of desires and Liberation. The first objective is righteous, ethical way of life in thought, feeling and action. If your life is based upon the right foundation, it will automatically go in the right direction and become effective in achieving the Goal. So the first and foremost requirement is knowledge. Obtain the necessary knowledge about Dharmic, moral and ethical norms. Don't start your life in ignorance and make a mess of it. Otherwise, in the end everyone will abuse you, fie on you. Instead of having a very chaotic life and messing up everything and regretting afterwards, have a clear-cut idea right at the very beginning about

the great Goal, ethical idealism, the concept of moral living, the heritage of human culture. The concept of moral living is a part and parcel of all the religions of the world. It is not a special monopoly of the Vedic Religion. It is there in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, everywhere. What is unique about the Vedic Dharma is that our ancient seers and sages, our law-givers wove it in the very fabric of our social life also. They have interwoven it as a part and parcel of our social life-style in such a manner that automatically these four objectives came into the range of our normal living. Also, utmost emphasis is made again and again upon the ethical basis of life. Nowhere, in no other religion so much has been said on this as it has been said in India.

In the post-Vedic era India has produced, a vast volume of spiritual and Dharmic literature which is unequalled. It is our treasure, as well as, an object of ridicule also. Other religions are based on a single text like the Bible, the Koran, the Guru Granth Sahib, whereas India has innumerable scriptures. This has puzzled the outsiders and they are ridiculing it. But it was not without reason that our ancients gave this vast literature. They went on adding to it, each century or even each generation through teachings of innumerable saints, sages, Yogis, devotees that lived in the society. Why? It is because this particular aspect of human life needed so much reiteration and repeated admonition as man's nature is extremely gullible. No matter how repeatedly you tell him, he succumbs to the worldly temptation. Guru Maharaj Swami Sivanandaji used to say, "Repetition was a part and parcel of our way of teachings. When a message is repeated a hundred times, may be ten per cent people would take notice of it by the sheer force of repetition. So they have done it deliberately." Gurudev used to call it 'crow-bar law' (gaddapara nyayam). If you want to dig a pit to get water from the earth, you have to hit the ground with a

crow-bar repeatedly for a hundred times or may be for a thousand times. Gurudev says, "The law of crow-bar is: Use it again and again, again and again; go on till you get the result." Likewise if there is repetition the message goes deep in the heart and some action results.

Secondly, if you say a thing in one way some people may grasp it, some may not. When it is repeated in another way, some more people will be able to grasp it. The human nature is variegated. There are innumerable types of tastes, temperaments, intelligence, understanding and ability to grasp and retain. So, everyone should be provided suitably. So the teachings are through the Upanishads, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Puranas. Even today also the wisdom teachings of saints like Gurudev are saying the same thing again and again in various ways.

The ancient sages have divided the life span into four stages:

(1) The *Brahmacharyashram*or the stage of celibacy and learning.

(2) The *Grihasthashram*, the stage of a householder,

(3) The *Vanaprasthashram*, the stage of withdrawal and living in forest, and

(4) The *Sannyasashram*, the stage of renunciation.

They have laid down the duties, principles and way of life for each of the stages as under:

Brahmacharyashram: In the first stage of life one has to acquire and imbibe knowledge so that he moves into the next stage of life with wisdom, with understanding, with full grasp of what life is, what are the values of life. It is the foundation-stage of acquiring character, good conduct, the full idea of how life should be lived, and of acquiring knowledge and of acquiring a clear idea of the highest welfare and purpose of human birth.

Grihasthashram: The second stage is of application of what has been acquired during the foundation stage. One has to live in accordance with what one has learnt. Of course you marry, you have a family and a household to look after and have to support the aged elders. So inevitably you have to earn your livelihood. The householder has innumerable responsibilities, obligations and work. So they have made provision of even all these aspects. The life of the householder, his wife and all the family members should be pervaded by Dharma. In Indian Culture Dharma pervades life from the beginning to the end. A householder has to discharge all his duties, fulfil all his obligations, earn enough wealth, not only for the present but has to make sufficient provision for the old age also. This is possible only if he and his wife discipline themselves on the lines of frugality, simplicity and austerity, and train the children also in the same way and avoid too much extravagance and indulgence. You should not pamper children and allow them to live a life of luxury, extravagance and spendthriftness; otherwise no matter how much you earn, it will not be enough, and when the children become wise they will curse you. Therefore, high thinking and simple living is necessary. In the midst of all these, one must never forget the Goal of life, there cannot be any greater loss, any greater deprivation.

Vanaprasthashram: The man has discharged his duties in this way and children are grown up. The Vedic idealism and the Indian ethos prescribe that, it is undesirable and improper for a man and his wife to go on continuing the same way of life and clinging to house, property, children, grandchildren, etc. NO. In the third stage, you and your wife should completely live a life of gradual withdrawal from too much attachment to the children, the family, wealth, etc., you should turn more and more inward, more and more take up the higher life, the spiritual life. You should go for pilgrimage, visit Ashrams, stay there for some time. When you are in

home, you should draw up a daily schedule of Sadhana, prayer, worship, spiritual study, Mauna, Vrata, fasting, penance, etc. Both the husband and wife should now be actively associated in the spiritual path even with a secular set-up. So, even while living in secular set-up they should withdraw themselves from the purely world life and move into the spiritual realm. In the third interim stage, earning of money and wealth is over. Artha recedes in the background.

The third stage is the interim stage. On one hand, you may engage yourselves in completing the residual obligations like the marriage of a daughter and in fulfilling whatever little Sattvic desires might have been left. On the other hand, you should prepare sound foundation for the fourth stage by completely living a life of Dharma, ethical consciousness, morality and idealism, and indulging more and more in spiritual Sadhana. You may try to become helpful to the neighbours and the society. Now all your desires are Sattvic. Now you have a little time, knowledge, wealth and mature understanding. In this stage Dharma is the all pervading factor, Artha has receded in the background. Even if you do not enter into this life voluntarily following our culture, the government forces you to enter it by retiring you from the service. After a certain age, a person should not continue working and earning. Our ancient law-givers have put this age at 50 years. Our secular government has made it 58 years. So one has to enter the interim stage of Vanaprasthashram in the evening of the life. Even if you want the world, the world does not want you.

So the first part of life acquires the first of the basic objectives, the knowledge of Dharma, ethics, morality. The second part is for the application of Dharma and knowledge in the conduct of daily life while giving this part of life to earning of wealth. In the third part, the activities of earning of wealth ceases and one turns towards fulfilling certain Sattvic desires for pilgrimage,

Satsanga, Sravana, Svadhyaya and serving the society by giving your time and knowledge, as well as, guiding the family and giving it the right direction.

Sannyasashram: The last quarter of life goes to the last objective, the supreme Purushartha and one strives for Liberation. The entire time, energy and attention are devoted to the supreme Goal, the ultimate objective of human life, the Self-realisation, Illumination or Enlightenment.

Gurudev has wisely taken this view and emphasised the Nishkama Karma Yoga, that is the selfless service of others. Selfishness is the most widespread disease that governs a human being, his life and activities. So first of all, one has to remove, eradicate, annihilate the selfishness lying within his nature. Otherwise, it is not possible to enter the higher life of Yoga. So he has said, "The first and foremost thing is, you must completely stress and emphasise only on service, Paropakara, helping others selflessly." He did not hesitate to give it the top priority, the greatest value. Gurudev is perfectly right, because selfishness is the root quality or the basic nature of human beings. When it becomes the ruling passion in one's life, one becomes anti-social; selfishness is essentially an anti-social quality. Our ancients knew it. Now psychologists, sociologists, political scientists, economists start with this axiomatic base: all human beings are selfish. They raise the structure of their philosophies and systems on this basic assumption. Gurudev knew it very well. This selfishness should be countered only by a dynamic plunging into absolutely selfless activity. You can get rid of selfishness only by doing good to others. Even after getting rid of the basic human nature of selfishness, extreme forms of immoral and unethical selfishness may go, but the subtle form of selfishness is always there. Even good people will think, 'I will not hurt or harm anyone to attain my selfish ends; but at least I should continue to attain my personal gains or my selfish ends without harming others, without

treading on other people's toes. No one shall be harmed by me, but neither should I harm myself.'

A mother told her young daughter, "You should give the bigger piece to Johny. You should always share what you have with others." The young girl replied, "I am good to everyone, but who is going to be good to me? I too have to live my life." Nowadays, some social philosophers and psychiatrists even advise us, "You must know to love yourself also. You must know how to forgive yourself also." The religions teach us to love our neighbours, forgive our neighbours. But extreme form of selflessness has its own traumatic effect. So the modern social scientists take a different but practical approach. They argue, if you are always in a state of self-accusation, you cannot come to terms with life. In that case, you cannot even move towards God. There is a book called *The Virtue of Selfishness* written by a well known writer. She advocates in it selfishness.

Gurudev laid maximum emphasis not only on the Nishkama Karma Yoga, but also on becoming unselfish and becoming an altruistic person. You should always share and give, help and serve. Gurudev says, "Even then also, you may be at any moment revert to your original selfish state. Such is human nature. Therefore, be cautious, keep unselfishness your motto throughout your life."

Gurudev has given us an integral Yoga system. He called it The Yoga of Synthesis. He says, "Don't leave the Nishkama Karma Yoga till you attain Illumination. Even after Illumination also you should continue it; because no one knows, when once again, one may slide back to one's old basic habit of selfishness." Whether you are a Bhakta, a Rajayogi or Jnanayogi, but you are an individual and you have to deal with other individuals. In that dimension of your life always make it a point to put service before the self.

This motto, this principle should always govern your life. But once you are established in the Nishkama Karma Yoga, unselfishness and dynamic unselfish activity, your emphasis should shift to relate yourself to God. This human body is given to you to restore once again, the lost relationship with the Cosmic Origin of your being, call It God or call It Brahman or call It Atman. Later on you must realise that the selfless service is a means to an end, and not an end in itself. Unless there is the basis of absolute selfishness, desire to serve others, kindness, compassion, mercy, unless you are fully established in these virtues, you cannot progress in Yoga and your spiritual Sadhana, devotion, meditation, concentration, Sravana, Manana, Nididhyasana, etc. You cannot make much headway in your Sadhana. All Yoga practices, all spiritual Sadhana, require this as a foundation. Later on also, you may continue this type of altruistic activity, but the emphasis should shift on worship, prayer, discipline, self-control, concentration, meditation, the right enquiry, reflection, analysis, investigation, discrimination and the pursuit of inner Self. Even while you are doing your higher spiritual Sadhana, you reserve a little part of your life upon the pattern of selfless activity.

Beware! That noble selfless activity can become a serious entanglement and a disturbance too, if it is not done on the basis of spiritual Sadhana. Also your spiritual Sadhana, all your Yoga, all your spiritual life would become futile, if it is not based on absolute selflessness, absolute self-sacrifice for others. Nothing can be attained in that case. So when you continue selfless service to a certain extent later on also as a part of your Sadhana, beware! It will be helpful to you only if it is based on spiritual Sadhana. If you think that mere selfless service alone can convert into spiritual Sadhana and transform you, you are committing a serious error. Only that aspect of selfless service, doing good to others can help you spiritually, if it is based upon serious,

regular, unfailing spiritual Sadhana, daily meditation, daily prayer, daily worship, daily reflection. Then alone, selfless service would be spiritual, it will become an Upa-Sadhana, a subordinate Sadhana or a helpful adjunct to your spiritual life, not otherwise.

Gurudev very wisely gave each particular type of Sadhana its due place and told the aspirant, you must know when the emphasis should shift from that to another dimension, another aspect of spiritual life. He was a perfect teacher, a perfect Master. In the beginning, he emphasised on all the rituals, all the ceremonials, and not a single thing should be missed. The daily Puja should be done correctly, the proper Mantras should be chanted. After the Puja you must perform the Arati and give Arati and Pushpanjali to everyone, everyone should offer Pushpanjali, thereafter Charanamrit, Kumkum, Vibhuti should be brought, everything perfectly. You should not miss a single thing, otherwise Gurudev would immediately ask, "What is the matter?" Suppose, due to neglect, Tamas or absent-mindedness they did not pluck Tulasi. Gurudev would stop them and ask, "Where are Tulasi leaves? Go and get some immediately," and he will stop the Puja and the Pujari or his assistant will have to rush and bring Tulasi leaves. Like that Gurudev was a stickler to details of ceremonies and rituals.

But while discussing with some advanced Sadhaka, if the Sadhaka says, "I don't have any inclination to go to the temple and do Puja. I can't do Japa, I want to do meditation," Gurudev would say, "Quite all right! Go on doing it. All these are means for reaching this stage. When God has mercifully brought you to that stage, these things do happen. Those practices are necessary for a beginner. If you have developed a taste for Japa, you do Purascharana. Don't worry about all this paraphernalia." He himself insisted minute details of the paraphernalia to the beginner; and was also prepared to dismiss them at one stroke if he found that the Sadhaka

has gone beyond that stage. He was capable of doing that too.

A little shocking revelation of this aspect of him: It was the year 1944, Gurudev was telling the journalist Sadhaka Sri Seturaman about his life, from four o'clock in the early morning in the Bhajan Hall. Swami Narayanananda and myself also used to remain present at that time. After closing all the doors and windows Gurudev would start giving dictation. We had to be all alert and attentive and take down the notes in a lantern or a wick-lamp light. Whenever he came upside of the Ashram, he would go to the Vishwanath Temple, go round it thrice and do Sashtanga Dandavat Namaskara, when there was no one to observe. I have observed him from far distance, but no one would be within the temple. If Gurudev was present at the time of Arati, he would stand in the row and when Arati was brought out, it would not straightway come to him; whosoever is next to the door from him it will start and then seriatim it would come to him and then only he would take Arati. He believed everyone is equal in the eyes of God and put this into practice. Similarly for Charanamrit and all that.

It was four o'clock in the early morning. Gurudev came up with the lantern to Bhajan Hall. All the doors were closed. All of us were taking down the notes. Gurudev was always so particular and meticulous in observing the details. That day, he went into reminiscent mood and the dictation went on for a longer time. He was saying so many things even without our asking any questions. He was coming to a very interesting point and the Arati started with the big temple bell ringing loudly. We could not hear what he was saying and he had to shout. Then he stopped, opened the door and came out, called a man and asked him to stop the bell! Arati was going on and he got the bell stopped! Then Gurudev came back and continued. I could not believe what had happened. Later I understood what he was. He was a Maryada Purusha, if not Maryada Purushottama. But

within himself, he always had in his pocket the highest Absolute Kevala Advaita Siddhanta and was based in that Consciousness. So, if required, he would have perhaps gone to the extent of doing what that old man, saint Vinoba Khechar* did. He was lying in a Siva temple keeping his feet on the Sivalinga, the symbol of Lord Siva. These are little, little things you can grasp if you keep your eyes and ears open.

The first narration of Papa Ramdas's wanderings was In *Quest of God.* It was very brief and to the point. It narrated mainly from where he went to where, from the southern end right upto Himalayas, Badrinath, and his return route. But in the second narrative of his second wanderings, in the *Vision of God* he describes:

> He happens to be in the ancient cave of Ellora. There is a very huge Trimurti of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara. The deities' heads are not much ornamented. Suddenly, something seizes him (he was always held by some other power), he forgets himself and elevates into an ecstatic mood and jumps onto the head of the Trimurti and starts dancing and chanting loudly Om Sri Rama Jai Rama Jai Jai Rama. When he comes out of his mood and becomes his normal self, he had not the slightest compunction that he had done something sacrilegious!

So these saints are in such a state of consciousness! Even though they seem to fulfil all the norms of the ordinary state of being, yet when they are suddenly elevated into higher levels, then their actions are quite strange. It is important to know their state. But don't follow them, we should not follow these extraordinary beings, just as Gurudev used to say, "Obedience is better than reverence." Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya told his disciple who was imitating him, "You should do as I tell

* *This was to explain Saint Namadev the all-pervading Nature of God.*

you, but should not do as I do." When the disciple persisted in imitating his Guru, the Guru taught him a lesson. They were passing by a blacksmith's shop when he was pouring some molten iron from the furnace. Sankaracharya said, "I am very thirsty. Let me drink something." He asked the blacksmith to give some molten iron and drank it. He asked that disciple, "Will you like to drink what I drank?" The disciple never imitated his Guru thereafter and got rid of his egoistic thinking by obedience.

Gurudev has given his teachings in such a balanced way that it can be useful to all the different levels and types of Sadhakas. He says, first the Nishkama Karma Yoga, then the green devotion, then ripe devotion, and then meditation. By green devotion he meant Vidhivat Bhakti or devotion with all the rituals. In this rituals are of paramount importance. You must take bath, put on certain type of clothes only, do this thing and that thing and so on. But you should not get stuck up to that state, you must transcend it and do more and more Japa, more and more meditation and enter into higher aspects of Yoga.

20

GURUDEV'S REAL MESSAGE

The goal of life is God-realisation. Never forget this. Aspire ceaselessly for His Grace. Thirst for His Darshan. Have constant Satsanga. You will realise Him.

You have come to this earth to attain spiritual perfection. You have come here to attain supreme and unalloyed Bliss. The purpose of human birth is to achieve Divine Consciousness. The goal of life is Self-realisation. It is your birthright. This is the aim of your life. —*Swami Sivananda.*

As we sit here in the sacred Samadhi Shrine of beloved Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, two great teachings of Gurudev appear before us in big writing right as you enter: BE GOOD DO GOOD. Did Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj come into this world just to tell us Be Good Do Good? Or did he come, live, attain Illumination and begin to proclaim a message, a teaching, a gospel to modern mankind asking us to do something more than Be good, Do good?

It is important for us to know, because we are not only admirers, devotees and followers of this great spiritual Master, but many of us are related to him in a special way, we are also his disciples. So it is very important for us to know what exactly he wants us to do. Is he satisfied with our merely being good and doing good or does he want us to do something more? If so, in what way being good and doing good is related to that something more? What connection does that something more have with being good and doing good?

While I say this, I quite realise that an appreciable number of you have never seen the Master. You never had the chance of meeting him directly, personally in this life. Naturally therefore, the relationship of discipleship is not possible. But you are all his followers, because you have found in his teachings great inspiration, great solace, great guidance in times of puzzlement, confusion, trouble. You have found from his teachings a light on the spiritual path showing a clear way. For that you are grateful to him. You want to be in that light continuously. So you are practising his instructions and teachings. You have, thus, set up a certain inner relationship with him. He infuses into you that light. He moulds your thoughts and feelings. He guides your actions in a certain specific direction which perhaps did not exist in your life prior to coming in contact with his teachings. Therefore, you are also to a certain extent, in an indirect way, disciples of the holy Master.

A disciple is he who puts himself under the guidance of a Master and tries to mould himself in the spirit of that Master's teachings, tries to live and act in a way that is in accordance with the specific instructions of that holy Master. That is discipleship. Even though you may have never met Gurudev, never have seen him, never have come into contact with him, you may be his disciples if having come into contact with his teachings and if you mould yourself, mould your thoughts and feelings in the way Gurudev has asked us to do and if you base your life and actions upon his teachings. In its own manner, such discipleship also will take you up in the ladder of evolution and bring you nearer to the great Experience.

Many Christians regard Jesus as the Great Divine Master, because he came, he taught, he asked people to follow a certain way of life and he admonished them to abstain from certain things. He even went to the extent of teaching people how to pray to God. He preached in wilderness, He preached by the fields, He preached by

the roadside, He preached under the trees. He also preached in Jewish temples. Like Sankaracharya and Swami Rama Tirtha, He passed away at a very young age. But had around Him a band of disciples, twelve of them most important. They propagated their Master's teachings after He passed away. All the Christians are followers of this great Master, and in a general sense are in a state of discipleship to this great Master who taught the mankind the way of attaining the Kingdom of Heaven, who taught the way to attain the Father, which means God or Bhagavan or Khuda. It is nearly two thousand years since Jesus appeared on earth. The Christians of today have never seen Him, yet the Christian world is in a state of discipleship to the great Master.

Likewise all of you, even though you might not be personally initiated disciples of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji; yet when you read his books and begin to follow his teachings, it is an indirect initiation. Ekalavya was refused instructions by Dronacharya because of certain specific reasons. Yet he learnt all the archery that Dronacharya's disciples had learnt under his discipleship. Therefore, whether we have met Gurudev or not, it is very necessary and important for all of us who regard ourselves in a state of discipleship to him, who regard ourselves to be related to him in the manner of the teacher and taught, in the manner of the Master and the followers, to be very clear in our mind as to what it was that he came to teach, as to what his message was and as to what he wanted us to become.

There are several ways of knowing this. First, if you read the books that Gurudev has written, you will know what he wants. But you will find yourself here in a very difficult position, you may be completely confused. Even though there is all the clarity, lucidity, simplicity and directness in Gurudev's teachings, if you say that you can know what he taught by going through his books, you will be confused. Because Gurudev has written on

everything upon the surface of the earth, he has written on all the aspects of man—his life, his spiritual ideals and goals, his ethical ideals and goals. He has written about health, sickness, diseases, long life, what to eat and what not to eat, on education, self-control, Yoga, Vedanta, Bhakti, Dhyana, Kundalini Yoga, on Asanas, Pranayamas, Surya-namaskaras. He has written about everything. He has written for women, householders, Sadhakas—he has written for everyone. The range of the subjects that Gurudev's book cover is bewildering. Therefore, that will lead us nowhere. That will not give us any specific light.

There is however, a better way of knowing what Gurudev wanted us to do, what he wanted us to become and what he taught us specifically. Let us begin asking ourselves one question, "If being good and doing good was what Gurudev came to teach, why did he who was doing a lot of good, a great deal of good in Malaysia as a doctor, leave it all lock, stock and barrel?" He had a very great field for continuously doing good and doing more and more good to a large number of people. If being good and doing good was what he wanted then he should have rejoiced in that field and stayed there in Malaysia itself. Why did he leave it all and come to this remote, God-forsaken little village? There was no bus, no taxi, no three-wheeler. Occasionally, a Tonga plied between Haridwar and Rishikesh, but most of the people walked the distance all through the dense jungle. Many pilgrims for the Badrinath-Kedarnath Yatra shouldered their burden and started walking right from Haridwar. There was only one Basti, Satya Narayana between Haridwar and Rishikesh. A school teacher from Nagpur who after retirement came and settled down in our Ashram, took Sannyasa from Gurudev and was known as Hariomananda or Ram Ram Swamiji, had undertaken the Badrinath Yatra in 1919, five years before Gurudev came here. He gave a good description of Rishikesh of those days. He carried a bundle on one shoulder and his

child on the other and his wife carried the rations. They had started walking from Haridwar. So there was not much scope for being good and doing good in Rishikesh.

In the terrific floods of 1924 which had washed away even the Lakshman Jhula bridge, washed away Gurudev's little hut in Ramnagar, three miles beyond Rishikesh. He did not want to be in Rishikesh, because it was too crowded during the pilgrimage months. Muni-ki-Reti was not yet developed. So he was attracted to the Swargashram side where some Sadhus had settled. That was the secluded place he wanted. So he occupied a Kutir which was just four walls and a piece of tin-roofing overhead, nothing else. For sometimes he occupied a broken down shed also. He selected a Kutir which was alone. He liked to be alone, to be away from the people. When he sat alone by the Ganga, many pilgrims and devotees came for his Darshan, for offering Pranams and for getting blessings. So he found out a certain rock by the side of Ganga. It had a sloping shelf-like formation where one person could sit inside. The rock was so far jutting into water that no one could approach that particular side of the rock, except by climbing the rock from the sand bank, going on the top and then dropping in there. Once he had dropped in there, he was completely cut off. No one could even guess that there was someone in there. So Gurudev was sitting there alone in seclusion facing Gangaji without being disturbed.

I was saying that there is an easier way of knowing what Gurudev wanted us to do. You need not get confused in the maze of subjects that Gurudev dealt with in all his books. To the aspirant world, he gave in a very brief form his concise teachings right from 1927 onwards. During his early period of penance, Gurudev jotted down certain instructions for himself. When sincere aspirants approached him, he would give them these instructions and would say, "Do like this." These instructions were later compiled as The Twenty

Important Spiritual Instructions.* This is his central teaching for the whole world.

These instructions are very interesting for the Sadhakas, because they are spiritual instructions. They are not called ethical or moral instructions, but are called spiritual instructions. So it is very clear that Gurudev wanted us, first and foremost, to become spiritual and not merely social do-gooders. First and foremost, he wanted us to be spiritual beings. A spiritual being means one who aspires to attain and achieve a spiritual goal. And a spiritual goal is always beyond this world, it cannot be a part of this world. This world is a materialistic world, whereas the spiritual goal is Adhyatmic one, one that transcends the present plane of human living. It is something beyond the mere mundane sphere of human existence.

You go through these twenty instructions and find out how many of them contain the ingredient of Be good Do good, may be one, may be two. Otherwise they are all practical instructions:

Self-denial: Reduce your wants. Keep only a few things. Lead a happy contented life. Have plain living. Avoid worry.

Self-reliance: Do not depend on servants. Self-reliance is the highest of all the virtues. Do your work yourself.

Vrata: Fast on Ekadasi or live on milk and fruits only.

Japa: Do Japa. Do meditation.

Practise Asanas, do Svadhyaya, study systematically the Gita, the Ramayana, the Bhagavata... Like that if you go through these Twenty Instructions, you will find they are subjective ethical instructions for your own moral perfection and ethical evolution. Right from the beginning the emphasis is on spiritual practice, on Sadhana. The very first instruction is:

* *See Appendix.*

1. **Bramamuhurta:** Get up at 4 a.m. daily. This is Brahmamuhurta which is extremely favourable for meditation on God, for Japa and other spiritual practices, because the atmosphere is filled with Sattva.

2. **Asana:** Practise sitting in one Asana for Japa and meditation.

At the end, Gurudev has said, "The quintessence of all the teachings of all the scriptures, all the religions, all the prophets is Sadhana." When he repeatedly emphasises Sadhana, where does Be good Do good come in?

Let us take next, an equally popular general teaching for the whole humanity all over the world. It is SADHANA TATTVA* or The Science of Seven Cultures For Quick Evolution of the Human Soul. Here, even more emphatically and unambiguously, as well as, categorically and very clearly Gurudev stresses Sadhana. It is Sadhana Tattva, the principles of Sadhana. Here there is even more emphasis on Sadhana than in the case of the Twenty Instructions.

One thing more I am never tired of reiterating is Gurudev's UNIVERSAL PRAYER. It is mainly for self-culture.

Grant us inner spiritual strength
To resist temptations and control the mind.
Free us from egoism, lust, greed, hatred, anger
and jealousy.
Fill our hearts with divine virtues.

All this is self-culture, nothing but self-culture. There is a gradual provision of ideas in the framework and pattern of the Universal Prayer, so that we may gradually be able to open our eyes and behold Him everywhere. Getting rid of vicious qualities and cultivating noble, sublime qualities, developing inner strength to resist the pull of lower negative tendencies

* *See Appendix.*

and become established in a higher state of noble conduct—all these is self-culture. Where comes Be Good, Do Good? It comes in the next two lines, but not in an ordinary way, but in a very, very unusual way:

Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms.

Here the implied be good do good is connected with God, with the All-pervading Cosmic Universal Being and not with the human society or the world. So even in this admonition to serve everyone, there is a distinct, unmistakable and undeniable spiritual dimension, a spiritual element. In the next four lines Gurudev completely and explicitly emphasises Sadhana only:

Let us ever remember Thee.
Let us ever sing Thy glories.
Let Thy Name be ever on our lips.
Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever.

We are supposed to say this prayer twice daily, in the morning and evening. What are we asking Him? Do we ask, give me a chance to build hospital and to be good and to do good and to serve the sick and the poor, to serve the patients and the society, to serve neighbours and the down-trodden?

Gurudev has said about himself, "I have come to uplift the fallen, to wipe the tears of those who are suffering..." Gurudev came with a mission, he has declared this about himself but not about you and me. He does not say to us, 'Do not uplift the fallen, do not serve the down-trodden, do not serve the sick and the poor.' On the contrary, he lays very great emphasis on service. Again and again, he has said to everyone, "Life without selfless service is nothing. The day without service is a waste. The salt of life is selfless service."

But he has also said, "Life without devotion is a dreary desert." "Without meditation, no Illumination; without Illumination, no Salvation." So Gurudev

emphasised selfless service, as well as Bhakti or devotion, meditation—all for attaining the ultimate Goal. That is, he emphasised selfless service, because it has a connection with that which he really wanted us to be and wanted us to do. He came in the modern age to powerfully draw people to the spiritual life and to powerfully goad people to strive for attainment of God-realisation, for the attainment of the Atmajnana by which alone one attains Liberation from the bondage of this physical, materialistic, earthly life and attains a state of Peace and Joy which we all are seeking. Therefore, Gurudev's number one emphasis was on "Goal of life is God-realisation." Gurudev shook up the modern humanity addressing in a thundering voice, "O Man! Wake up! Goal of life is God-experience, Self-realisation. Know yourself in the innermost spiritual depth of being. You are not a creature of a temporary existence of birth and death. You are that eternal, imperishable Being. You are a part of that Universal Consciousness." He did not say that the goal of life is doing maximum good before you die.

Whenever a disciple became obsessed with being good and doing good and got entangled in ceaseless activity, he would say, "What a fool you are! The precious human life has been given to you to meditate, to develop devotion, to do Japa and to do Sadhana for the Realisation of God, but you are wasting your life in this pursuit. Many Sankaracharyas have come, many Buddhas have come, many Jesus Christs have come, many prophets have come, but no one has been able to change this world. The world is like a dog's tail; it will always be crooked. If you try to straighten it, it won't straighten. If you put a dog's tail in a pipe and tie it up, as long as the pipe is there it will remain straight. But when you take the pipe out, the tail will curl up again. The world is like a dog's tail, it cannot be straightened up, and you are only a fool if you try to do so, and your life will be wasted, it will go away."

Why did Gurudev say 'Be Good Do Good?' Why did he lay emphasis on Karma Yoga? Why did he praise selfless service? He praised it in one book only. If you read his **Practice of Bhakti Yoga**, if you read **Practice of Vedanta**, if you read his **Practice of Yoga**, you will find that he does not ask you to do philanthropy or altruism or selfless service. He emphasises one hundred per cent on Yoga-sutras, on concentration and meditation, on Yama, Niyama, Asanas, Pranayamas, Pratyahara, Dharana. He goes fully into these subjects. He asks you to be a Yogi.

Then, why is it that Gurudev's call to Karmayoga and selfless service has become blown out of proportion and exaggerated? Because, it is the only thing the normal individual in the world can see and appreciate. How can common generality of people or social and political leaders appreciate the inner life of a spiritual personality? They don't know it. They have no idea about it. Moreover, they are interested only in tangible results and benefits of a person's life and actions. So if it brings some benefits to them, they give applause, they give a big certificate. But if no tangible result in the form of benefit to human society is seen, then they are not much interested in it, nor impressed by such a personality.

For the seekers, for the spiritual world, the contrary is true. They will form a bee-line in thousands to some sage, who does not even speak, let alone act. Perhaps the sage just sits. How many thousand of people year after year, went for the Darshan of Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry! He did not engage himself in any social activity, he did not preach any particular type of being good and doing good. All his life he spoke about supramental Yoga. His Ashram is a colony of about four hundred families living in as many buildings scattered all over Pondicherry. The great Master had his own Ashram complex within a compound-wall with a single gate. But in addition to that complex, the Ashram extends in so many different localities. The Ashram runs

a school because so many families settled down there to live near him and they had children and something had to be done for their schooling. Likewise, the Ashram has to run a hospital too.

The great sage gave Darshan on three or four days in a whole year, the day of his Illumination in Alipore Jail, his birthday and some such distinctive days. Otherwise, people could not have his Darshan. On Darshan days, people came from all over India, from all over the world and lined up in a queue awaiting their turn. The Darshan would be for a few seconds or half a minute or a minute only. Sri Aurobindo would be seated in his chair and devotees moved on in a long line past him.

Sri Ramana Maharshi, the great mystic and saint was totally different. He was available all the three hundred and sixty five days of the year and all the twenty-four hours of each day. He was like a tree standing at cross-roads or on a vast plain approachable from all the directions. He had no privacy, no private life. Anyone could go to him. Whether anyone came or went away, he did not mind and went on with his own activity. When it was time for him to take bath, he went, took bath and returned. If he had to answer his calls of nature, he simply got up and went out, answered the calls of nature and came back. There might be fifty people or a hundred in the hall, the Maharshi kept to his own routine daily chores like cutting vegetables and walk. He did not mind people there. Maharshi seldom spoke to anyone. He did not pay any particular attention to anyone. In his presence, devotees were supposed to meditate. It went on like that for years. And yet, thousands went there in order to sit by his side and see him. He never asked anyone, 'Go and Serve' or 'serve the nation, serve the society' or 'Be good Do good'. He never said any such thing. If anyone asked any question, he would say, 'Who is it that is seeking this guidance? First find out that. Reflect again and again. There are so many things outside you. Why do you try to know about them? Why

don't you start inquiring about yourself? First you know something about yourself.' He was an uncompromising Siddhanti of the Vichara-marga. He never stirred out of his Ashram nor had he any activity in the Ashram. He never talked about the economic condition of the nation or the poverty-line. Nothing at all. And yet, the highest social and political leaders of the country went to see him and sat by his side. This is India. Perhaps it is the only country where a penniless wandering monk used to get more reverence and worship than a king or an emperor. But suppose someone had asked him, 'Is it good to serve one's neighbours?' He would not have said no. He would have said, 'It is good to do all the things which are not bad.' If you engage yourself in doing good, then it will at least keep you away from doing that which is not good. That value it certainly has. There can be no denying this.

One may specifically ask, what was it that Gurudev came to teach? This is the question put to all the great saints and sages. Sri Ramakrishna Dev Paramahamsa, the saint of Dakshineshwara was asked by his immediate followers, "What is our duty when we are living in the society? Is it not necessary that we should feed the hungry and clothe the naked, do charity and look after orphans and widows?" Sri Ramakrishna Dev said, "It is all right. There is nothing wrong in your engaging in such acts. But don't ever forget that the most important thing for which God has sent you here is doing Sadhana and attaining God-realisation. This should be your **Top Priority Goal**. This is the first and foremost thing for which you are given the human birth. Other things are only secondary. First you do plenty of Japa, Sadhana, Yoga, meditation. If you have got some time left over after all your Sadhana engage in charity, engage in helping others. But never think that the very purpose of life is to help others. Who are you to help others? Can God not help people who need help? Don't think that He cannot do it, He is not capable of helping the sick and the poor and so you should do something. This sort of too

much preoccupation of helping others is also a sort of delusion, an egoistic delusion."

He gave a very appropriate illustration: After a very long and arduous journey, a pilgrim reaches Kashi, the holiest of holy places in India, to take the holy bath in Gangaji and to have Darshana of Lord. After taking the holy dip, he proceeds towards the temple. There are many, many beggars. He thinks to himself, 'I have come to this holy place, so I must show kindness and compassion and do some charity.' He starts giving small coins to the beggars. When he reaches the temple, he finds that the temple is already closed for the Darshan for the day. What a foolish fellow! He spent so much time and money undertaking such a long and troublesome journey and forgot the very purpose of the journey, namely, the holy Darshan of the Lord! A pilgrim should first go directly to the temple and have the Darshan. Charity can be done after the Darshan.

So the crux of the problem is, we forget the purpose of the journey and go back without having Darshan of the Lord. Gurudev was a prophet. He says, "The Goal of life is God-realisation. Never forget this. Aspire ceaselessly for His Grace. Thirst for His Darshan." "God-realisation is the Goal of life; that is the purpose for which you have come. All other things are secondary." You can do charity and other good, noble acts by the way, provided that your endeavour is mainly to attain the Goal of life. Yet why people have got this peculiar delusion that he came to emphasise Karmayoga and he wants people to serve the society? Totally wrong. **Totally wrong**.

Why did Gurudev emphasise that people should engage in service? There are several reasons, all of them leading to the same truth. Gurudev found that the vast majority of people who came to him, came upon a sudden emotional or sentimental impulse. Reading some book or hearing some lecture, they got the impulse to renounce immediately and become a Buddha. Gurudev found that

a vast majority of them when they came to him, were not fit for meditation, meditation for them was a far cry. There was so much inside them, deep-rooted selfishness, ego, etc., that they had to be got rid of these first. They cannot reach anywhere until they got rid of the impurities of mind. So he could not tell them, 'Meditate and Realise.' So he said, "Engage in selfless service. Serve the Guru, serve the pilgrims. Serve poor and sick. Serve visitors and guests. Serve your parents at home. Serve all elders. Serve your neighbours and then serve the society, serve your nation, serve the whole world. First, be a good son or daughter to your parents. Afterwards serve everyone around you."

Gurudev very well knew out of the depths of his own personal spiritual experience that a large number of people were unfit for meditation because their minds were filled with dirt and impurities. Unless that is completely removed and the mind is cleansed, refined and purified and the heart is also refined and purified, Sadhana, meditation and Samadhi remain a far cry. So, Gurudev would say to such people, "First of all, you have to purify yourself by engaging in selfless service." So Gurudev put Sadhakas to selfless service in the beginning as a means to become fit to enter into other forms of Sadhana. If you have not got rid of impurities of the heart and the mind, even while doing Japa the mind would be wandering all over the world and mechanically the fingers will be moving the Maala, the lips will be muttering Mantra, but the mind will not be in it. So Gurudev has said that if you want to do even Japa with concentration and single-minded attention and make it effective, you must first purify your heart and mind through constant selfless service and get rid of all negative, unspiritual, undivine qualities and then take to Japa. That Japa will be effective and fruitful.

Many Sadhakas left home, property, relatives and everyone and once and for all accepted the path of withdrawal, Nivritti Marga and spirituality. They came to

Gurudev and said, "We want to go to Uttar Kashi. There is too much crowd here." Gurudev used to say very, very plainly, "Do you think you can do meditation all the twenty-four hours a day if you go to Uttarkashi? Twenty-four hours of meditation is impossible, you will not be able to do that. Due to *Arambha-shuratva,* over-enthusiasm of a beginner, you may try to over-do meditation for a little time in the beginning. But afterwards, a reaction will set in suddenly and you will become disgusted; and you will not be able to sit in meditation even for half an hour. Gradually you will become lethargic and you will become Tamasic" Gurudev used to warn clearly, "Beware! You will enter into Tamas. This is a great danger." If people straightaway go in seclusion and plunge into intensive Sadhana without the purification, they will fail and become Tamasic, this is the greatest danger. Ultimately, they will become useless to themselves, useless to the society, useless to anyone. Therefore, in the beginning you must seriously engage yourself in some sort of activity. Serve your Guru, serve the Sadhus, go and work in some temple, sweep the temple, clean the utensils, pluck the flowers. Do everything for the simple reason that no one meditates for all the twenty-four hours. Sadhana all the time is not possible. The mind can be fixed in a specific Sadhana for a limited period only. Therefore, Gurudev recommends varieties of Sadhana. He says. "Meditate a little, do Kirtan a little, do Japa a little, do Svadhyaya a little, do Asana-Pranayama a little." Even while doing such varieties of Sadhana, there is a limit to the number of hours that you can keep yourself completely occupied in Sadhana. It requires a heroic mould for a person to be able to have the strength to go on doing only spiritual Sadhana from morning till evening. It is not possible. Years and years of selfless service, self-purification and Sadhana will ultimately lead you to that state.

Thus being good and doing good is only a preliminary means to prepare oneself to enter into the

actual realm of the Yoga, the portals of Yoga. You will be able to go through various Yogic practices, processes and techniques, only if you have cleansed your mind and heart of gross and subtle impurities and you have purified yourself completely. That is the prerequisite for taking up Bhakti, Bhajan, Kirtan or Sravana, Manana, Nididhyasana or meditation or any other Sadhana. In this way Gurudev's admonition 'Be good do good' has a direct connection with the thing he came to teach the modern age, a direct connection with what he wanted us to do and attain.

He was, and still is, the prophet of spiritual life and spiritual Sadhana. He came to thunder from the Himalayan heights, "O Man! Wake up! Precious is the human birth. Do not waste it away in eating, drinking and sleeping. It is given to you to do rigorous Yogabhyasa and to attain the supreme Goal of God-realisation, Super-Consciousness." The first thing, the second thing,... the last thing, Gurudev came here is to give spiritual Sadhana its rightful place in your daily life. A life devoid of spiritual Sadhana is living death, it is no life at all. The entire life-span is a Sadhana Shibir. We have come here to do Sadhana and attain Self-realisation. But we have forgotten this ideal and neglected Sadhana. We have to give it the proper place in our life.

Gurudev was a realist, a pragmatist. He knew that it was not for everyone to take the path of renunciation. People may have the devotion and aspiration, but they have also got duties and responsibilities. They have filial duty towards their mother and father, in-built responsibility to the family and dependents. So Gurudev gave us certain schemes of life, the daily timetables which included seven hours of obligatory work in office or business, one hour for commuting to and fro, one hour in the evening for recreation, for going to a club or for a walk or playing tennis or badminton, one hour in the morning for shopping and purchasing vegetables, etc. After providing liberally for all these activities. Gurudev

said, "Get up at 4 a.m. and do Japa, do Sadhana, do meditation, do Asana-Pranayama, study the Gita, the Ramayana, the Bhagavata, the Upanishads, the Yoga Vashishta." So the emphasis is on Sadhana, on spiritual life, on inner life. Because you have been caught in the grind of daily life to earn your bread, Gurudev has given time for office-work, shopping, recreation. But you have not been given this human birth just to earn money or do shopping or play tennis. The allotment of time for all these activities is unavoidable allotment. All other time, Gurudev has given for Sadhana. He has not separately kept any time for social service. If you have got a chance on Sundays, certainly do some social service. Go to some hospital, distribute fruits to the patients in the general ward, speak to them nicely and kindly. About holidays Gurudev used to say, "Make the holiday a holy day. Come to some secluded place, do Anushthana, do Purascharana. Instead of going to Mussoorie, Simla or Ooty, go to some place of pilgrimage and do intense Sadhana."

That was Gurudev Swami Sivananda, a great teacher who came to tell the modern man that the purpose of life is Sadhana, it is the most important thing in life of a human being. Sadhana should not be neglected. It should be given top priority. In the beginning a man is not fit for Sadhana due to the grossness of mind, due to the impurities of the mind and heart like selfishness, egoism, envy, jealousy, intolerance, anger, greed, ill-will, hatred, vengeful tendencies. So Gurudev advised, 'First of all, for a certain period in the beginning, engage in vigorous selfless service; but always keep in mind that this is only a preparation for the main purpose of life.'

Bharatavarsha is a land of Tyaga, Tapasya and Sadhana, Bhakti and Bhajan. That is our heritage. That is our main duty. As the modern man has forgotten his main duty, forgotten, Yogabhyasa, forgotten vedanta, forgotten God, forgotten the purpose of life,

God-realisation, Gurudev came to remind us, to awaken us to this great heritage and called us to enter the path of Sadhana and Yoga. This is the truth about Swami Sivanandaji's message to mankind. This is the truth about his wisdom teachings for the modern man. This is the truth about his teachings as Guru. *He came only to call us and stir us up vigorously to follow the path of Yoga and Vedanta, and to engage ourselves in spiritual Sadhana for attaining God-realisation. He gave the admonition* 'Be Good. Do Good', only because a vast majority of us are not fit for Sadhana.

A doubt may arise in a Sadhaka's mind and he may put forth a question, "After I have done vigorous selfless, egoless service for a fair period and when my mind becomes pure and devotion arises, I will be able to launch upon the inner practice of Yoga Sadhana, Vedantic Sadhana. Now that the being good and doing good, the Karma Yoga or selfless service has served its purpose, can I then give it up totally and turn exclusively to Japa, meditation, etc.?" If this question implies a query, "Can I afford to give up being good and doing good?" Then the answer is "NO. You have to be good and do good only. You should not do anything which is not good. You must do good and be good till the last breath of your life. Even after God realisation you should still continue to engage in being good and doing good. This is necessary for your subjective life."

But if you enter in the field of service and give all your time, energy and attention only to the service of the society and humanity, then you are firmly caught by Maya. It becomes an obsession and a great delusion. You are not supposed to live all your life only serving the society and running around for that. Then you will be committing a great mistake. You will miss the Goal for which you have come. You have not come here for merely doing social service, Paropakara. You have come here mainly to do Yogabhyasa to discipline yourself, to concentrate, to meditate and to Realise. This is the sole

purpose for which you have come here. Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji came upon the scene in the twentieth Century to remind you of this only, there is no doubt about it. I can tell you this with perfect conviction and absolute surety and certainty.

Once upon a time, I too was running about like a mad man from morning till midnight serving, serving, serving, serving everyone—serving the sick, serving the distressed, serving the Sadhakas, serving the visitors, serving everyone in the locality from a beggar to the highest person, serving even dogs, cats and crows. One day while Gurudev was coming out of the office he saw me running from the kitchen towards the dispensary holding 3 to 4 saucepans. He enquired, "What are you doing?" I replied, "I am taking the food for the dysentery and typhoid patients." In the afternoon, when he was coming out of the office, he saw me doing the same thing again. It was too much for him. He was so angry, so displeased with me. He asked, "What is this you are doing? Is this what you have come for?" Then he said something which I don't want ever to tell anyone, but I will never forget it, I am always keeping it in my mind.

We will be underestimating Gurudev and failing to understand and realise the purpose of Gurudev's advent if we thought that he came here to emphasise selfless service. He emphasised service only for those who had absolutely no spiritual idealism and who were continuously immersed in living a life of selfishness, of self-centered activity with no higher goal or ideal. For those people only Gurudev said, "Selfless service is the only salvation for you. Leave everything and plunge into selfless service."

This advice is not for Sadhakas, not for the devotees, not for the disciples who have already become aware of the spiritual ideal. No, no, no, no. Gurudev advocated selfless service only to the vast majority of the worldly people who were incorrigible and for whom Sadhana was

impossible. When Gurudev found that they go on living the whole life only for themselves like beasts—absolutely selfish, absolutely egoistic, absolutely running after sense pleasures, to save them from the dire consequences of such a blind and unethical life, he said, "Come, come. Be selfless. This is not the life you have come for. Be good. Do good. Do selfless service."

Swami Vivekananda has also said, "He lives who lives for others; the rest are mere dead even though living."

The selfless service advice is for the worldly man. But we do not belong to that category. Having come into the living contact with Gurudev and his teachings, having obtained the third rarest good fortune we are under the protecting care of a perfected sage.

दुर्लभं त्रयमेवैतद् दैवानुग्रहहेतुकम् ।
मनुष्यत्वं मुमुक्षुत्वं महापुरुषसंश्रयः ।।

'The human birth, the longing for liberation and the protecting care of a perfected sage, are the three rare things and can be obtained by the Grace of God only' (Vivekachudamani 3).

Jagadguru Adi Sankaracharya makes no bones about why we have come here, about what we must achieve. Having attained the protected care of a great soul like Gurudev, it will be the greatest tragedy, if we do not try to strive for God-realisation. Gurudev gave us a one hundred per cent pure undiluted spiritual teachings, teachings which are absolutely spiritual. Having come to his lotus feet, if we fail to get the right spiritual message, if we fail to understand it and become over-obsessed in mere social service, no matter how good it may be, it will be a great blunder. Howsoever necessary the social service may be but if you think that you are the only person who can do it, then it is a subtle type of unconscious ego. Even before you were born, there were people to serve the society, and after you go away then

also people will be there to go on doing social work. God's work and place will not suffer whether we are there or not. We must realise where we stand. Too much of good thing is also not good and requires a time to cry a halt to it. No one has said the last word on this like the Tamil proverb, Alavukku minjinal amritamum visham, which means too much of even Amrita becomes poisonous and kills you. If you take the literal meaning it makes no sense, because the moment you take Amrita or ambrosia or nectar you become immortal, deathless. Amrita cannot be a poison. The two are absolutely incompatible. They are mutually exclusive terms. Our ancients also said, अति सर्वत्र वर्जयेत् 'Give up excesses of all kinds.' So even good thing like nectar should not be in excess.

There should be a time for playing, time for working, time for selfless service, time for meditation. If you do not realise that, then you may get caught and you cannot blame anyone.

I sum up this sharing about the purpose of Gurudev's advent in this particular age in his own words, "I have come here to teach Yoga and Vedanta." His message is: "Do real Sadhana my children, do real Sadhana. The opportunity of human life may not come again. Don't lose this golden chance and then regret afterwards. Engage yourself mainly in Sadhana."

If you see his vast literature, what he has said about Karmayoga is only very little, very little. But he had the habit of following an ancient tradition. When they speak about a particular thing, they say, "This is the highest and the greatest. There is nothing comparable to this. Nothing like this." We must understand that this is a part of our tradition. It is like a marketing technique. Unless you say so, who is going to buy your product? When Gurudev talks about Karma Yoga and Seva he will say. "This is the highest. Nothing like this." But see him talking about Vedanta, he says the same thing. When he talks about Bhakti Yoga, he says, "It is only a Bhakta

who can know God in the deepest essence. Even a Vedantin cannot enter into God as deeply as a Bhakta can enter." Sri Ramakrishna Dev used to say, "A Vedantin can go only upto the drawing room. Only a Bhakta can enter the innermost chamber. The innermost intimate experience of God is possible only for a Bhakta and not for a dry Vedantin." When Gurudev talked about Raja Yoga, he says, "There is nothing higher than meditation. Raja Yoga is the supreme science of sciences." Our this tradition is known as Arthavada, praising to the skies a particular subject which you are trying to give to the people. When that subject is over and you go to the next subject, you praise that also similarly. It is like a real estate agent trying to sell a house. He will talk gloriously about a certain house. And if he comes to the conclusion that the customer wants something else, some other house, then he will talk ten times more gloriously about that house. This is understandable. Arthavada is a part and parcel of our tradition and it should not be misunderstood.

हरेर्नाम हरेर्नाम हरेर्नामैव केवलम् ।
कलौ नास्त्येव नास्त्येव नास्त्येव गतिरन्यथा ।।

'In Kaliyuga, the only path for attaining the Liberation is God's Name. There is no other path, no other path, no other path.' But it does not mean there is no other path at all.

So in the context of this Indian tradition, you should understand the Master in the right way and then grasp his teachings. Suffice it to say, he came here to proclaim to the mankind the life spiritual, not a life of social service. To those who were incapable of doing higher Sadhana, Gurudev said, "All right! Do not waste your life completely. If you cannot do Sadhana at least lead a life of total unselfishness and engage in some type of Seva or other." But to his disciples and near devotees Gurudev's message is, "Do real Sadhana. Engage mainly in Sadhana."

Nishkama Karma Yoga is the foundation of higher Sadhana. But if you do the foundation and then forget all about the rest of the building, then you cannot live in it, it cannot give you the shelter. Don't think that the foundation is the building. The foundation is undeniably the start, the necessary, indispensable, most important start. But if you think the foundation itself is the building and sit on that only, you will miss the super structure just like the man who came to Kashi for Lord Vishvanath's Darhshan but was lost in the charity and Punya forgetting the purpose of his coming and when he came to the temple the Darshan was closed for the day.

Let us all, very clearly realise that the advent of Gurudev was to teach Tyaga, Tapasya, Virakti and Sadhana, He came to teach Sadhana. He advocated, 'Be good Do good' firstly as a preparation for Sadhana, and secondly as a protection to Sadhana. After launching into spiritual Sadhana, when the fruits begin to come, you have to protect the harvest. The only safeguard for making fruits of your Sadhana permanent is to always remain in the path of being good and doing good. This is your safeguard, your protective fence, your defensive armour. That alone keeps your Sadhana ever progressing, and prevent a possible downfall or a back sliding. This is the relationship between being good and doing good and Sadhana for God-realisation.

In the beginning being good and doing good is a necessary preparation. Later on it is a necessary safeguard. And thirdly, even after you attain Self-realisation you continue to be good and do good, because it just becomes an outcome of your divinity, your nature. God is ever showering His Grace, Love, Compassion and Kindness upon all the creation. When you become one with God, those divine qualities begin to operate in you. So in all these stages, being good and doing good has a certain place. In the beginning it is a preparation. During the spiritual life and Sadhana it is a protection. And ultimately it is merely a manifestation of your divinity.

21

DIVINE LIFE

Divine Life movement is a plan of life and a goal that is common and acceptable to all upon earth, who wish to rise above sorrow and obtain lasting Bliss.

More than to strive to reach heaven after this life, the followers of the Divine Life try to make conditions of Heaven prevail upon earth... The basis of this movement is adherence to the triple ideals of truth, non-violence and purity—the common fundamental tenets of all the religions throughout the world.

—Swami Sivananda.

We have been trying to know about Gurudev's life and his teachings, what he taught us. One of the very, very important, most significant insight that Holy Master Swami Sivanandaji brought into our life and into our understanding is the truth that the spiritual striving, the Yoga-Sadhana cannot be diverted from daily living. You cannot treat them as two things apart having no interconnection. They cannot be treated as watertight compartments. It is impossible that what is going on here has no relevance there. Because, whatever striving you make, whatever Yoga, whatever prayer, whatever meditation or worship you make is within the framework of your life you are living. You are engaged in your spiritual Sadhana within the framework of that life itself, it is the scope of your Sadhana. Your daily life is the receptacle or the ground on which your Sadhana is to rest. So these two are inextricably and inseparably bound up together and are closely interconnected; whatever you are doing in living your daily life has

necessarily its effect on your inner life, on your Sadhana life. Also, whatever Sadhana you are doing in the inwardness of your own spiritual subjectivity has its impact on your daily living. If the inner spiritual life you are living within the spiritual interior of your own subjectivity, does not have a corresponding effect on your outer, normal, day-to-day living, then you better sit up, and take a second look at yourself. There is something fundamentally wrong. Something has been wrong somewhere. The Guru will not be able to tell you what. God may try to make you aware of it in direct and indirect ways, but he does not come and correct you. Therefore, it is upto you to take a look at yourself, with very great seriousness, earnestness, sincerity, impartiality and total honesty, and find out what is wrong. If I am entering into that vast silence, that vast Peace in my meditation why do I not have the same peace when I come out of meditation and relate myself to the life around me? What has gone wrong? Why do I not project that Peace outside? I am talking about only one quality of the great Reality. It implies various qualities, fundamental among them are Purity, Truth, Compassion, Sat-Chit-Ananda, Joy, Cheerfulness and Auspiciousness. That is an expanded blessed state of the mind when you are content to be alone, you do not require anything to be added onto you, you are full. When you are alone, company of your own self is more than enough for yourself. You have no desire, no inclination to come out of yourself and to get into some company or relationship. Our scriptures call it Swatmarama Avastha or the state of abiding and rejoicing in the Self. This is your permanent ground. This is your continuous, unbroken normal state. Let this grow and you will overcome all your problems.

You cannot burn an incense stick and yet not have the room filled with its fragrance. If no fragrance is there, there must be something wrong with the incense stick. It is not a genuine one.

Right from the ancient times down to the medieval age, the spiritual ministers, the great devotees and the mystics have given their Experiences and teachings in songs. In this great land, there have been innumerable such devotees and mystics. All of them have reiterated the same truth and spiritual values. If you have a genuine, authentic spiritual life, if you are a real Sadhaka, a devotee of the lord, your interior life must have its inevitable influence and impact on every thought, word and action in the living of your day-by-day life. And that is the test for you. If there is a dichotomy between your outer life and inner life something is wrong. Find out its reason. Reflect upon it: "If my interior life is genuine and honest, authentic and real, then why is the link, the relationship not there? I am really a wonderful child of God. I am with God inside. But the moment I come in contact with God's other children, I become something else, something different. So either there is something wrong with my interior spirituality or with my external normal dealings with God's world and God's creatures. Why the two behaviours are not connected? Why there is a sort of a break?"

Holy Master Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji regarded the living of your daily life as important, if not more important than the practice of your spiritual Sadhana. He gave, not without any reason, a very significantly true message of 'Divine Life'. His institution is The Divine Life Society, its magazine is The Divine Life and he gave the name Divine Life to his message. He did not call it this Yoga or that Yoga or transcendental meditation or any other name. This name that he gave has very much relevance, very much connection and relationship with your life. Gurudev regarded the living of your life equally important as the practice of your spiritual Sadhana, your Yoga, Vedanta and meditation. Perhaps he regarded the former more important than your spiritual life. Because if your life, your daily living is proper, then alone your Sadhana will proceed unhampered and be progressive

and it will yield fruits, and it will go on yielding fruits. You don't have to wait till it culminates in spiritual Realisation. It would go on yielding fruits right now. It would go on giving flowers and yielding fruits step by step. So Gurudev called it Divine Life. If your life is lived rightly, your Sadhana will be fruitful, progressive and effective. If your life is not lived rightly, the fruit or result will not be commensurate with your effort—much effort but little fruit. How can you afford to do that? How much time you have in your life span to go on doing such effort? No one knows. We are here now, but what moment we will not be here God only knows. Therefore we cannot afford to make a lot of effort in spiritual Sadhana without getting the desired results. Your Sadhana must yield fruits. So Gurudev rightly laid great emphasis on our day-to-day life.

Gurudev was very fond of giving analogies in support of intricate truths. He enjoyed it greatly, one such analogy is:

> There were some merry-makers who had consumed more liquor than that was good for them. So they were high. They went out for a rowing trip to some place a little away further down the river. They went out on a hot summer night, expecting to reach the destination at the dawn. With all the preparations they came to the river side and boarded a boat. They went on rowing, singing cheerfully in expectation of reaching the great destination. When it was twilight, they were in great spirit thinking that they would soon be reaching the destination. Then they saw some persons coming towards the river for taking the bath, they started shouting: "We have reached, we have reached." But someone said, "All these people look familiar."
>
> They asked someone, "Which is this place?" The villager rebuked, "Don't you recognise your own village?" A merry-maker argued, "We are rowing for

such a long time and how is it that we have not reached our destination? How can we be stationary at the same place?" So the wise man explained, "Your boat is tied to a tug in the post. You cannot make any progress unless you untie your boat."

In the same way, the spiritual Sadhana will not bring you nearer to the destination, if you do not, first of all untie the bonds of impurities of Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada, Matsarya, desires, jealousy, hatred, anger, hostility, greed, delusion, untruthfulness, dishonesty. Our efforts will be like the oil-man's bullocks moving on and on from dawn to dust and yet remain at the same place without making any progress whatsoever. If we do not untie ourselves, make us free from all the impurities before launching into spiritual Sadhana either we are trying to deceive ourselves or the people, or we are very, very unwise, thoughtless, foolish. The great scriptures say, 'the essence of spiritual life is gradually becoming like That whom you adore, whom you are trying to Realise, whom you are meditating upon. A meditator must gradually become transformed into the object which he is meditating upon. If the object is the ultimate Reality that is All-good, All-noble, All-perfect, Absolutely Pure, Bliss Absolute, the Sadhaka must also become Good, Noble, Perfect, Pure, Holy, Godly. Vedanta declares ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मैव भवति 'The knower of the Brahman becomes Brahman Itself' (Mundakopanishad 3/2/9). If you really want to worship God, you must become God-like, you must become a god. Then only you can connect yourself with Him and worship Him. The essence of worship is connecting yourself with the Divine Reality and moving towards It, approaching It and entering into It. Ultimately all Sadhana is connecting yourself with the Reality, approaching It and entering into It. If you want to connect yourself with the supreme Reality, there must be something in you similar to That. Then alone there can be a point of contact, and you can have relationship with God. To worship It, we must already have within us, at least to some degree, the nature of the supreme

Reality. It is no use quoting Vedanta saying, 'I am an Amsha, a part of God, I am already divine, why should I have anything to do?' This is no good. This is at best, a second-hand knowledge from the scriptures or lectures. This was perhaps the main reason why Gurudev called his gospel 'Divine Life' and did not call it this type of meditation or that type of Vedanta or this type of Yoga or that type of Sadhana, or Kriya Yoga or super-Sadhana. There are so many schools, so many teachers who give specific types of meditation or Sadhana or Yoga and all that. India is full of them. But then, no one seems to realise the importance of emphasising upon life, emphasising upon living the life in a noble, pure, godly, sublime way. This is more than half of all spirituality, all Sadhana. Once you become well-established in a good and noble life, in a pure and holy life, in a life full of kindness, compassion, sympathy, understanding, forbearance, forgiveness pardon, then that life itself has already taken you on the spiritual path. It is like a perfectly prepared field prepared by a farmer for sowing after removing stones and woods, cleaning, ploughing, manuring. If he sows seeds in such a ready field within no time the sprouts appear and he yields a good harvest. If the ground is not prepared, you all know the biblical analogy of the sower of the seeds*.

Therefore, Gurudev gave equal emphasis on life as he gave on Sadhana. Sadhana will be in vain unless supported by a spiritual life, Yogic life, holy life.

* *A sower went forth to sow; and when sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up, some fell on stony places, where they had no much earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty fold, some thirty fold. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. (The householder) said, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them. (The New Testament.—St. Matthew XIII).*

Gurudev's emphasis on holy and spiritual life is very well depicted in Narsì Mehta's poem. The gist of the Gujarati poem is:

O Lord! Even if I keep religious observances,
Even if I take food only once a day,
Yet if anger, jealousy, revenge do not vanish from my mind
Then all these are in vain, in vain.

Even if I visit the temple daily,
And adore the deity with flowers and incense,
Yet selfishness, greed, attachment, egoism, arrogance vanish not
Then my worship is a mere self-deceit.

Even if I mutter prayers and do Japa all the time,
Attend Satsanga regularly and meditate for hours,
If love, compassion, kindness and joy do not become my nature.
Then my spiritualism is not true.

Even if I stay in seclusion and observe Mauna,
Practise austerity, Tapas and proclaim
. . . . . non-attachment, renunciation,
Yet if my desires and Vrittis are not annihilated,
And I have not transcended the body-consciousness

And know not the Supreme Soul that dwells in all the beings,
Then all is futile, all is futile.

22

WHAT BROUGHT ABOUT A CHANGE IN GURUDEV?

Humanity, wake up! Turn Godwards! Turn towards the Divine Light while there is yet time.

—Swami Sivananda.

Come all! Take up this guide and hasten to set foot upon the inner track leading upto the temple of transcendental Bliss.

—Sri Sridhar Rao.

We have been trying to know about Gurudev's life and what he taught us, trying to know his teachings. I would like to bring something in his own words, what he said about himself. Gurudev gives here a little glimpse from his own life:

I always love silent Sadhana in seclusion. During the day, for a very short period, I would write some articles and letters to thirty aspirants. I did not use kerosene light, nor did I work at night at any time.

(The night is meant for Sadhana, contemplation and sleep. Working in the night is one of my diseases, imposed upon me. That is the only time when I am undisturbed and I can work. There is no work done during the day. I have been wanting for many, many years not to work in the night.)

I used to come out of my Kutir just for one hour in the morning to serve the sick people with medicine.

(One hour because he had to go to Kshetra. His usual method was when he went to the Kshetra, he carried three bags slung upon his hand. One contained some medicines, another contained a few coins and the

third sago and some diet articles. Later on he carried a fourth bag containing some leaflets. He would go to the Kshetra, get his Bhiksha. On his return, he would stop if he sees some old Sadhu or some sick or ailing person. He would stop and keep the Bhiksha down and give him some medicines and diet articles. He used to give even money to some persons to purchase milk to cook with the sago. One has to go to a Kshetra at the right time. So while going, he was going straight to the Kshetra. Swami Paramanandaji told me that the first glimpse of Gurudev he had, was while he was returning from the Kshetra, with all these, Bhiksha in one hand, a little Kamandalu of Dhal in another and the three bags on returning to his Kutir, he was taking a little wash and doing prayers before his meals.)

I used to come out of my Kutir just for one hour in the morning to serve the sick people with medicine, for a brisk walk in the compound, bath in Ganga and for going to the Kshetra for bringing my food. This sort of routine has become my habit during my 35 years of life in Rishikesh. I never indulged in loose talk with friends. When I went to the Kshetra, I observed Mauna. To avoid people I used to walk through the jungle, not the highway path. While walking to the Kshetra, I combined deep breathing exercises and mental Japa.

(All of us also can do that when we go to the dining hall and not to lose any time at any part of the day. I have been told that after Gurudev became well-known as Dr. Sivananda, he used to cover his head and go to the Kshetra and stand last, and when everyone had gone away took his Bhiksha and hurried through the jungle path back to his Kutir.)

I had no ambition to become world famous by extensive tour or giving lectures from the platform. I never attempted to be a Guru to anyone. I am not pleased when people call me Satguru or Avatara. I am dead against Gurudom. That is a great obstacle and has

caused downfall of great men in the spiritual path. Gurudom is a menace to the society. Even now I ask people to do Namaskar to me mentally only. The few lines which I wrote to one of my disciples in 1931, convey my attitude very, very clearly:

"I am only a common Sadhu and may not be able to help you much. I do not make disciples, I can be a sincere friend till the end of life. I do not like to keep persons by my side for a long time. I give lessons for a couple of months and ask my students to meditate in some solitary places like Uttar Kashi.

"I never said or did anything to tempt people with promises of a grand result like Mukti from a drop of a Kamandalu water, or Samadhi by a mere touch or a look. I emphasise the importance of silent Sadhana, Japa, meditation for a systematic progress in the spiritual path. Invariably, I ask all aspirants first to purify the hearts through selfless service of mankind."

In 1933, the publishers in Madras wrote articles on my life and mentioned me as an 'Avatara'. Immediately I gave a reply which explains the attitude that I have always maintained:

"Kindly remove all 'Krishna Avatara' and 'Bhagavan' business. Keep the publications natural and simple, they will be attractive. Do not exaggerate much about me very often. The juice will evaporate. Do not give me titles like 'World Teacher', 'Mandaleswar', 'Bhagavan'. Lay bare the truth. Truth will shine. I lead a simple and natural life. I take immense delight in service. Service has elevated me. Service has purified me. This body is meant for service. I live to serve everyone and make the whole world happy and cheerful."

Even before donkeys and other animals I do mental prostrations. To my disciples and devotees, I first do Namaskara. I behold the essence behind all names and forms. That is real Vedanta in daily life.

From 1930, many earnest students with burning desire to devote their lives to spiritual pursuits came to me for guidance. I had also burning desire to serve the world. Those were the days when Sadhus and Mahatmas lived in peculiar pitiable conditions without necessary comforts and conveniences and proper guidance for spiritual evolution. Many tortured the body in the hot sun and in the Himalayan cold. Some were addicted to intoxicating drinks to induce the so-called Samadhi.

(Even now they are. Formerly they used to have cannabis, hemp to go high, now brown sugar and what not.)

With a view to training a small band of Sannyasins and Yogis on the right lines, I permitted some aspirants to live in the adjacent Kutirs. I arranged for their meals from Kshetra and gave them initiation. I arranged all comforts and conveniences for them. I encouraged them and infused Vairagya in them. I took special care of their health. I frequently enquired about their Sadhana and gave useful hints for the removal of their difficulties and obstacles in their meditation. When they offered their services to me, I asked them to go from Kutir to Kutir and find out the old and sick Sannyasins and serve them with Bhakti and Shraddha by bringing food for them from the Kshetra, by massaging their legs and washing their clothes.

I asked some educated students to take copies of my short articles and send them to magazines and newspapers for publication, and devote their time to study, Japa and meditation. They all took great pleasure in copying out my articles as they all contained the essence of the teachings of sages and saints and a clear commentary on the difficult portions of the Upanishads and the Gita. My articles contained practical lessons for controlling the turbulent senses and the restless mind.

(This copying work itself was spiritual education for them).

Planning and scheming were not in my nature. I depended on the Grace of the Lord. I gave them intense Sadhana, for some time made them dwell into selfless service and afterwards I sent them to meditation in solitude.

* * *

This is the early days life of Gurudev when he had no Ashram, no society, no institution of any kind, when he lived a life of a free Sadhu depending on Swargashram Kshetra for Bhiksha and had all the twenty-four hours at his disposal. Among the first few who came and joined him were Swami Paramanandaji, Swami Atmanandaji of Gujarat, Brahmachari Gopalananada Chaitanya, and for some time one Swami Narayanananda who was illiterate but was physically very, very willing to do any type of service and a couple of others. Gurudev gave them Gerua cloth* so that they could get Bhiksha. They used to live independently in some Kutirs and depended on Kshetra for Bhiksha. They tried to learn something from Gurudev. When they wanted to do some service, they went to serve old and sick Sadhus. That was the way in which Gurudev began his life.

When Gurudev came to this bank, he settled down in some dilapidated complex of four rooms, built in ancient manner with no iron rods, no cement, nothing but just sand, lime, mortar and some bricks. He called it Ananda Kutir. He lived there in later thirties. In 1940-41, he shifted to his present abode** by the side of Gangaji. Even then, his nature was exactly the same as it was during the Swargashram days. He hardly ever came out of his Kutir except for attending the office in the morning and the afternoon and for the night Satsanga. The night Satsanga was the main feature of the Ashram life in those days. Round the year, it was a must for all. So when he came out of his Kutir, it was mainly to attend

* *Initiated them as Sannyasins (or Brahmacharis); Kshetras gave free food (Bhiksha) to them only.*

** *It is now known as Gurudev Kutir.*

the work, to sign letters, to give instructions, to hand over the manuscripts to the people who had to type them out several copies and to meet visitors. He came out for doing his work, assigning work to his students and meeting visitors.

When I came here (in May 1943), in the beginning they gave me certain work which I had to do in the room very next to the office where Gurudev sat. It was called Lakshmi-Puja room. There was also, in that room, the library of the Ashram. So both Goddess Lakshmi and Goddess Saraswati, were in that room. Everything that was going on in the office, I was able to hear because there was a door between the two rooms.

Gurudev may stay in the office for an hour or an hour and a half, or sometimes even for two hours. In all those two hours Gurudev was in the office, I would hardly ever hear his voice. If he did speak, may be he spoke half a dozen sentences during the entire time that he was in the office. He would do the work by signs, never wasting his breath unnecessarily on talk even with his students. Of course, the students understood him perfectly. Even before he would ask something, they would do it. They were always keenly observant and alert. Even when a visitor tied him with lot of questions, he would go on listening the questions, one, two, three, four... and then he would give the visitor a book. After listening all the questions, sometimes he would say, "Oji! Japa Karo... Rama Naam Ka Japa Karo. Repeat God's Name, everything will be all right." He never entered into detailed elaborate explanations or replies. He refused to be drawn in any type of conversation.

In the night Satsanga, he came silently and sat down quietly. Throughout the Satsanga he was a picture of serenity and absolute silence. When the Satsanga came to a close, he concluded it with the Mahamantra Kirtan and some other Kirtan of the day. On Monday Siva Kirtan, on Tuesday Saravanabhavaya Kirtan, on

Wednesday Rama, Krishna, on Thursday Dattatreya, on Friday Devi, on Saturday Hanuman and on Sunday Suryanarayana Kirtan along with the Mahamantra Kirtan. If got a mood, he would also sing,

Serve, love, give, purify, meditate, realise

or

Jagat Kalpana, Jiva Kalpana,
Sabahi Kalpana, Deergha Sapana.

The Mahamantra Kirtan was the basic closing Kirtan, then that day's Kirtan, a little Om and afterwards the Mahamrityunjaya Mantra and the Universal Prayer. Then Arati. After the Arati he sat for a little time so that those visitors who arrived after the afternoon office hours or the visitors who might have missed his Darshan in the office can see him and talk to him. He would sit, enquire about them, enquire some inmate where they had been put up, whether they have been given kerosene lamp, water bucket and a smaller bucket for going to jungle (for toilet). Sometimes he would enquire to the extent:

Gurudev: "Did you give him the bucket?"

Disciple: "Yes, Swamiji."

Gurudev: "Had you cleaned the bucket?"

Disciple: "Yes Swamiji, it was cleaned."

Gurudev: "Did you give the bucket filled with water?"

Disciple: "It was filled with water and put in their room."

Gurudev: "Did you give a lantern?"

Disciple: "Yes, Swamiji."

Gurudev: "Was there kerosene in it?"

Disciple: "I had filled kerosene in it."

Gurudev: "Did you trim the wick?"

Disciple: "Yes, Swamiji."

Gurudev: "Did you give them a matchbox also?"

Disciple: "Yes, Swamiji."

Gurudev: "Have you warned them about monkeys and scorpions?"

Disciple: "Yes, Swamiji."

He would thus ask everything about the disciple's Seva to the visitors and then sit for a little while, and suddenly get up and go. Sometimes, when he was in a good mood, he sat for even half an hour. But normally he would sit for five or ten minutes only and everyone would come and see him, present themselves to him, he would give a few instructions and go away. Sometimes he would ask, "How long you would be here?" If the visitor says one week, then he would say, "Do Japa, do Anushtana, sit by the Ganga bank." Otherwise, there was no other conversation. Very little during the office hours also. It was like that for the first three or four years of my Ashram life.

Once, something suddenly happened and he started talking for hours. From that time onwards, his inwardness, silence, everything became a thing of the past. The thing which brought the sudden change was that he had a sudden urge that there should be a continuous stream of teaching from the Ashram here, reaching to every nook and corner of India and the world. He suddenly got the idea: "The monthly magazine would be read in a few days and the readers will be once again enmeshed in Maya and whatever spirituality they gained would completely evaporate and they will once again slip into darkness. No, we should not allow them to slumber, we should not allow them to forget the spiritual teachings. They should always be kept awake and alert. They should always be spiritually hot. Once a month is too far between two teachings. So everyday, something should be printed and sent."

In those days, we did not have even a printing press. People argued that to print and send spiritual teachings

everyday was not possible, there was no money even for postage. So Gurudev started a weekly. The first weekly series was given an outlandish name **Ken Series**. In Scottish language 'ken' means to know. But Gurudev was not satisfied. He said, "Who will understand the meaning of ken? Its name should be such that everyone understands." Swami Narayanananda suggested Jnana Surya Series. Gurudev liked it and said, "Ah! That is nice. When one gets the magazine, the sun of wisdom rises and all the darkness vanishes." So after a couple of months the name was changed it became **Jnana Surya Series**. A block was made with a dark background and a brilliant white sun rising, spreading rays of light. Later on when the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University was established, it became Y.V.F.U. Weekly. Now he was satisfied that something was going on every week.

From that time onwards, Gurudev's inwardness, silence, he being a man of few words, became a past history and he went on talking and talking and talking.

So this was Gurudev, how he began his spiritual life in Rishikesh. What was his fundamental nature? Some say, he was a most outgoing person and an extrovert. Far from it, he was basically an inward person, though not an introvert. He was an extrovert but he had overcome that nature and became established in a deep inwardness, and became silent, reserved, not inclined to talk, not inclined to go out and so he never went out anywhere. His Autobiography reveals a little bit of his nature and his teachings.

May Gurudev's blessings be upon all.

23

GURU WITHOUT GURUDOM

To those around him, he is gentle, loving, kind, helpful, ever ready to listen, to soothe and to guide. He is tenderness and compassion incarnate.

—Sri. N. Ramakrishnan.

He had the loving heart of a mother, the helping hand of a real friend, the enlightened peace of a sage.

—Yogi Satyarka.

You are the Divine Mother Incarnate, O worthy Soul!
May we call you Jagat Gurudev, O immaculate!
Destroyer of ignorance, Master, Protector of all beings!
Grant! Oh grant that the whole world may follow the path of Truth always!

—Yogi George Zutzaler (Switzerland).

I call him sweetness, jam, Bliss! Like the children looking up for the sweet face of their mother, aspirants crave to look at the immortalising face of Sivananda, the Blissful.

—Swami Krishnananda.

Gurudev insisted on truthfulness and Brahmacharya or purity in thought, word and deed, and Ahimsa or not hurting/harming anyone. Sometimes he took it easily the violation of truthfulness. But he was very strict and serious about Ahimsa. As long as, there is some verbal quarrel or hurting others, he may say 'All right,' but he may ask the persons to ask for mutual apology and touch each other's feet. After that he would ask them to do certain number of Japa or observe some spiritual practice for atonement. That was his way to get

off the Sadhakas from angry mood, begging pardon of each other by touching each other's feet.

But so far as the character was concerned, he was very, very firm. He did not want to tolerate any slip. People always take advantage of kindness. They mistake kindness as weakness. Therefore, Gurudev put his foot down when the question of behaviour came. He would immediately give instructions to the spiritual aspirants under his guidance or his disciples, no matter where they were, even if he might have sent a man to Madras, another to Calcutta or Lahore to look after the printing work.

In those days, there was no Divine Life institution, no pressure of multifarious works and he had all the time to himself. So Gurudev used to write letters in his own handwriting and sometimes there were two or three page letters also. He was very, very specific, correct, downright, frank and straightforward in his advice to his disciples in his letters. Sometimes, one may say, it makes even disturbing reading.

In a state of complete neutrality, I am only reading some actual paragraphs from the letters he wrote. I am not saying anything. Neither do I give any opinion about it. It is a part of Gurudev's Autobiography and this he included under quotations from his own writing. I just put it before you for your own pondering without having anything to say.

There are one or two letters about: how the aspirants should be cared for, helpfulness and love for all, how aspirants should behave, what should be their nature, and on encouragement and advice. I know the person to whom this advice was given. He was one of the senior personalities of that time-period. Gurudev has included a few letters in his Autobiography. I put them before you for your own pondering.

I am always grateful to those who have served the Divine Mission. I value their services immensely and I am

ever lavish in showering praise. I also look to the personal necessities of my students, their health and spiritual evolution. Some years before I wrote to my students:

I

"Take care of your health. You cannot live on grass, water and air alone. Give up this idea at once."

(Gurudev did not like too much penance, penance he did advise but not too much).

"Take nutritious food and plenty of energy-giving fruits. Learn to relax. This is very important. Go for a long brisk walk. You have done solid work this year in printing line. This will amply suffice. It is all His work. It is all His Grace. Feel this. Are you comfortable there? May I send you some money for your personal expenses? Milk and nutritious food are needed when people work in the active field of dissemination of knowledge or do rigorous Sadhana in seclusion."

II

"You have done miracles. It is not flattery. I never expected so much from you. Do not overwork. Regulate your energy. Take rest in suburbs when you are tired. On Ekadasi, hold Kirtans in different centres. Hold weekly classes. Have silent individual talks. You can influence people more by this method. Never sleep in householders' homes. Run away from ladies. No play and joking with them."

III

"Do not be afraid of cold in Rishikesh. Do not be unnecessarily alarmed. You may use my blankets. Take milk and tea from the shop on my account. May you enjoy the Peace of the Eternal."

IV

"Take rest. Do not work hard. Apply cooling oil on your head. Do Pranayama in early morning when it is cool. It will recharge you with abundant energy. Take fruits also. Never neglect morning meditation and evening meditation. The goal of a Sannyasi is Vedantic Realisation of 'Aham Brahma Asmi*.' Brahmanishtha** is your food, drink and all in all. This can be kept up along with Karmayoga.

"I have great respect for the Sanskrit language and I encourage my students to study Sanskrit."

V

"If you change your outlook, vision, imagination and attitude a bit, you can be happy here and everywhere. Man suffers on account of his own imagination and his old habit of thinking. He never allows himself to be changed. This is Maya. Adjust and adapt. Be happy and cheerful at all times. Evolve quickly and become a dynamic Yogi and bring Light and Knowledge to the whole world."

Who Can Start Ashrams

An Ashram is a glorious centre to ensure World Peace. Many enthusiastic persons start Ashrams with a fine letter-head. That is not enough. The starting of new Ashrams by beginners will not bring good results to the world. It needs special faculties to run an Ashram successfully. For beginners, that will be downfall. Many years ago some Sannyasis wrote to me for financial help and advice for improving the activities of their Ashrams and the reply I gave to one of them is reproduced below. That clearly explains my attitude and principles.

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* *I am the Brahman.*

** *To remain established in That.*

VI

"Beloved Swamiji, your achievements, ambitions, aims and objects are laudable indeed. O Swamiji, aspire not for Gurudom, comforts, name and fame when you start an Ashram or a religious society. Generally those who start Ashrams are humble in the beginning and do some service. When they become rich and well-established, they care not for public service or individual evolution. They become arrogant and autocratic. Beware of temptations and work as a meek Sevak always. Even after Self-realisation, leave not the daily routine of Sadhana.

"I do not know any rich Raja or Zamindar. I have no disciples. Some aspirants who want real spiritual training consider me as their Guru. I take great care of them. That is all. I cannot help you with money. I am serving the world in a variety of ways and work through all Ashrams, Mathas and religious institutions.

"If you do public service with a selfless spirit, if people see the spirit of renunciation in you, they themselves will volunteer to help you in every way. Do not move heaven and earth for money. Try not your luck through Derby Sweep. It is a pity for Sadhus to think of such schemes.

"Nowadays, aspirants do not care to look to their spiritual progress. They shave their head, colour their clothes and remain at Rishikesh for some time and then pass off for great Yogis. They begin to collect money for starting Ashrams for leading a comfortable life.

"There are enough Ashrams and Mathas in India. Sincere, selfless workers are rare. Before one starts an Ashram, one must be leading an exemplary life. His very presence must give peace, power and bliss to all. Only then can one successfully run the institution.

"Before starting an Ashram, the mottoes, ambitions, aims are no doubt grand, charming and attractive. As

soon as a little fund and fame come, the ideal is forgotten. The spirit of selfless service dwindles away. The objectives are abandoned. The founders want to lead a comfortable life with some chosen disciples and followers. Even granting that the founders are able to live an ideal life, their disciple will not be able to manage it with the same spirit later. It becomes a place of quarrel or a business house. The head of the Ashram and the inmates there, should lead a life of real Vairagya, absolute renunciation."

* * *

So when we go through some of Gurudev's very, very firm and rigid spiritual instructions, we should always understand that we should not judge the person who gave these instructions. He is not personally interested, he is not giving it from his individual point of view only. He is seeing the need for a certain type of life without which the downfall and degeneration of human nature is certain.

Gurudev has come to raise a warning and a word of caution and has given some teachings in the context of the present age and the vicious atmosphere surrounding people and the total bankruptcy of moral principles and ideals. He was not putting forward his outlook and views. His one and the only outlook was the highest welfare of the people concerned, more specifically, the highest welfare of spiritual aspirants, seekers and those who are on the path of spiritual life. It was out of total impersonal desire for the welfare of the persons whom he was writing. Mind you, he did not go from cities to cities and address Universities, high schools, public meetings. gatherings, etc. He had no direct contact with the people whom he was trying to guide and inspire for leading a spiritual life. They were all unseen audience to him. His was the written word. When he sat in the aloneness of his Kutir and was in silence undisturbed, he had before him, the world of his imagination. He wrote these admonitions

for that unseen world with his heart full of goodwill and a deep desire that mankind should be happy, mankind should not walk the way of entanglement and misery and bring suffering afterwards. If we get acquainted with his teachings and spiritual instructions from that impersonal way and if we try to appraise them, then only we will derive and obtain maximum gain from his teachings and we ourselves will become blessed.

Gurudev as a teacher to the aspirants and a preacher of the moral way of life—the path of truthfulness, purity and goodness, is something that we should grasp and understand in the right way and we should not say he is giving some ancient teachings which are no more valid today. On the contrary, he was a man of our times. If we want to gain maximum from Gurudev, we should know what was his ground, what were his objectives and intention when he gave his teachings. Then alone, we shall open ourselves to his teachings without prejudice or misconception.

* * *

What happens when the Lord decides that a Jivatma, an individual soul, who is a part of Him, has wandered too far away from its Home, and instead of learning lessons it has gone into bad company and has started whiling away time doing everything except fulfilling the purpose for which it has been sent to this great school of the universe for Perfection? This world is a university for attaining divinity. But the individual soul is playing truant and not attending the class and it is not learning the lessons of life. The All-compassionate, All-merciful, Infinite love whom we call God takes recourse to two methods in order to correct the Jivatma:

1. *The method of the father or the use of cane:* The soul finds that the way he has taken is very painful, very terrible and very, very difficult to bear. He sends severe trials and then makes the soul realise through pain and sufferings that it is going the wrong way, to realise it is

enough—sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof, to realise its own error that it has strayed in the path where there is nothing except pain and suffering. It tries to start searching: 'Where can I find peace? How can I put an end to this pain and suffering? Something must seriously be wrong with my way of living.' Then, this quest brings that errant soul into contact with the scriptures and all the sources of knowledge and guidance. It realises its own mistake of having strayed away from the path that leads to its own good, its own welfare, may be through contact with more evolved souls and wise beings. Thus it makes a change of direction and begins to go on the path towards God.

2. *Mother's Method:* The second method that the Lord employs is the mother's method. He spares the cane. He sends certain great, noble, large-hearted, all-compassionate souls once in a while. Through them He manages to awaken the individual souls and to bring to awareness of their mistakes. Through the all-compassionate all-loving message, the teachings and the spiritual ministry of these noble souls, a large number of Jivatmas, an entire generation is awakened and many, many individual souls who have strayed away from the path, try to get back to their supreme Home of eternal Peace and Blessedness, having attained which one does not come back into the wheel of ever recurring death and birth, again and again. यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम।। 'Having reached which they return not; that is My Supreme Abode' (Gita XV-6).

Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji constitutes the Mother-Love of God. God decides, "Now let Me not be too hard. There is enough misery, suffering, pain and sorrow for the individual souls who had the misfortune of coming into Kaliyuga, the fourth Iron-age. To be born in this Iron-age itself is a punishment. So let Me not exercise the hard way. Let Me now send someone as My representative as the very embodiment of My Kindness, My Love, My Compassion and My Concern."

Thus, we have a sublime, most loving and most considerate personality in the form of Holy Master Swami Sivanandaji. He was sent on this earth as God's representative, as His Love for the mankind, in order to call back the souls to the ultimate Home in a very, very soft, sweet and loving manner. He was simplicity itself.

In the extract which I read to you from the Autobiography of Gurudev, he has said:

"I sternly warn my disciples of the canker of Gurudom. I am one of those who hates Gurudom. I make no disciples. I am ever ready to serve everyone till the last day of my life. I make people independent... I keep no disciples. I have no arrangements here. You can come and stay with me. I will arrange for you a Kutir in which you can stay. I will arrange for your Bhiksha in the Kshetra. So you have to follow my instructions and practice. I shall serve you nicely. But I have no arrangements. I have no Ashram."

That was what Gurudev wrote to no other a person than Swami Paramanandaji who was with Gurudev since 1932, well before the Divine Life Society was established.

Gurudev never put on air, nor he considered himself as a Guru. Gurudev has written, "If only out of their devotion and faith, if some of my devotees regard me as their Guru, well! Well and good. I have nothing to say about it."

24

MOST REVERED YET HUMBLER THAN STRAW

One great feature of his life is that he respects every soul, be he a king or a sweeper, and treats everyone as his own soul.

—Sri. R.B. Singh.

His modesty was also unparalleled. Such modesty can rarely be seen even in the mythological Rishis of yore. No sage or saint of such love and modesty can be seen even in Puranas.

—Swami Tapovanji Maharaj.

तृणादपि सुनिचेन '(a humble state of mind thinking) oneself lower than even the straw in a street.'

—Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Now, I want to bring out to you, what was it that we saw in him and what was it that we learnt from this towering personality who had reached the dizzy heights of Brahma-jnana.

Gurudev was a world-revered being. He was not only a world-renowned person, that he no doubt was, but he was also a world-revered being. The Vedantins, monks, non-monastic devotees, Sankirtanists, Yogis, scholars, philosophers, social leaders, high dignitaries of the State, all of them were all at one in paying their homage to Gurudev.

Gurudev was visited by the first President of India Dr. Rajendra Prasad. He came to the Sivananda Ashram and Gurudev welcomed him, received him, paid honours and there was a special Satsanga in the Bhajan Hall.

When I requested him to say a few words he told me he had come here in the Ashram for listening to the wisdom teachings of Swamiji and for getting some inspiration from Swamiji. When I requested him again to say a few words, he did speak but in the same trend:

> We are shouldering responsibilities of the nation at a very difficult time when the nation is in a crisis. We hope to serve our motherland and our people in the best way possible. I pray for Swamiji's blessings and advice for that. It is only through the blessings and benediction of such great spiritual luminaries like Swamiji that we who are small persons having been elevated to big positions of highest responsibilities, will be able to discharge our duties to our satisfaction and the nation will be able to prosper. We will be able to fulfil our responsibilities only through the blessings and benediction of such great souls.

He paid two more visits to the Ashram.

When Dr. Radhakrishnanji, the world renowned philosopher, scholar and one of the most erudite intellectuals of our century, became the Vice-president of India, he also visited the Ashram in 1954. Gurudev was seriously ill that summer and so he was not able to meet Gurudev. We represented Gurudev and gave him a very, very nice reception. Later on, when he became the President of India, he came again and visited Gurudev. He came from a place Sarvapalli in Andhra Pradesh and Ms. Vanibai Ram, an intimate disciple of Gurudev hailed from the same area. He used to regard her as his own daughter and she had a direct, unhampered access, straight to the innermost quarters of the Rashtrapati Bhavan. Whenever he had any problem he used to send a message to Gurudev through her. And Gurudev wrote and sent his message back through her.

When Sri V.V. Giriji was the Governor of Uttar Pradesh, he with his entire family was a regular visitor to

the Ashram. Once, he requested Gurudev, "Swamiji Maharaj! I am a public servant and I have to attend some official work. My engagements and programmes are in the hands of the local people. But I never want to go away without seeing you. So please tell your disciples that even if I come at some odd hour when normally you are not available, they should not refuse me to have your Darshan. Please tell them in my presence." So Gurudev had to call the disciples and instruct them, "Oji! Sri Giriji is welcome even if he comes at any time. Don't tell him that it is not time for me to see the visitors. Inform me and let him come to me." So whenever he had some official work in Dehra Dun, Haridwar or Roorkee, he used to visit the Ashram. Later on he became the Vice-President and then President of India. After that also he had come and seen Gurudev.

Field Marshall Cariappa, the first Indian Commander-In-Chief of the Indian Forces was very close to Gurudev. When Gurudev was in Delhi during the last lap of the sixty-day All India Tour in 1950, he invited Gurudev to his home. He expressed the desire to come to the Ashram and later he did come and visited Gurudev. The affection and mutual regard between Gurudev and him was something that cannot be described. Even today, he is an ardent devotee of Gurudev. He has Gurudev's picture, his parents' picture and a statue of an ordinary Indian Jawan in his study-room. Every morning after his bath, on his way to the breakfast table, he will go to the statue and salute the Jawan, then stand before the picture of his parents and pay reverence saying. "You have given me this body, you have trained me and made me fit to become what I am." Then he will bow before Gurudev's picture and talk to him, "You are a great man! You are a great man! I salute you." I stayed with him for three days and everyday he used to tell me, "Swamiji! I go there and first of all I salute the Jawan for it is they who protect our motherland. That is the highest thing a man can do. Then I go to my mother and father who brought

me up and trained me. Then I go to Swami Sivananda. He was a great man! I bow before him and tell him, You are a great man." He took me there and once again went through the whole ritual.

Sri Morarjibhai Desai, Sri K.M. Munshiji, Sri Jai Prakash Narayan, Sri Gulazari Lal Nandaji and many other dignitaries also visited the Ashram and paid their respect to Gurudev.

Gurudev's simplicity is something to be seen to believe. In Gurudev's nature, there was not the least bit of a ripple of the feeling of self-importance. He never had that thought, 'I am something.' He welcomed the dignitaries with love but was not awed by their status; because for him they were just God's manifestations. Once they came into his presence, all formality was set aside and they were at home, quite relaxed.

This same Gurudev who was the recipient of the highest homage and reverence from the top people of the country, was very, very simple and totally devoid of ego and pride.

He has written a very brief epistolary autobiography **Sivananda Gita**, in eighteen handwritten letters, starting from the first of January and ending on the eighteenth of January. When that was published people were simply fascinated and charmed by it, as it was so simple, unassuming and frank. When he wrote, "I.., I.., I.., I..." anyone will think he is a super egotist. But when one goes through the book, he understands how very absolutely transparent simplicity of his heart was! We saw in him a human personality as Sivananda. He was not talking about himself. Gurudev was at a different level of consciousness. He would have just as well had written all these things about a third person.

Someone suggested, "It would be more interesting and it would make the book lively if each one of your letters had on the opposite page your photograph bringing out the main theme or idea of that letter." So

Gurudev said, "Yes, yes, very good." At that time, we did not have in Rishikesh the facilities of photographers and studios in Rishikesh. So Swami Paramanandaji suggested, "Swamiji, I will take you to Haridwar at Sehgal's studio." And he soon contacted Sehgal. Sehgal said, "Gurudev will have to stay in Haridwar for at least one day. I will study and think out over the themes that you have given to me. I will work out what is the most appropriate pose. On your side, you also study the theme and give your ideas. We will take thirty-forty pictures, so that you can select the most apt and appropriate picture for each letter."

So we went to Haridwar and put up in the Ashram of Mahant Sri Shantanandaji of Sravannath Jnana Mandir. It was a very big Ashram. It was a unique place where there was a very, very beautiful Siva temple with Panchamukhi Siva, Siva with five faces like Pashupatinath in Kathmandu. It has a big verandah for Parikrama. The temple was at a height but the Parikrama verandah is at a lower level.

We saw there, a totally different aspect of Gurudev. He and the Mahantji were like friends. It was summer time. Mahantji took Gurudev to see the Ghat of their Ashram. So we all went there. It was a private Ghat. There was plenty of water. Gurudev said, "Oji! Why not take a swim?" He took off his clothes and entered the water. To our surprise, Gurudev started swimming and enjoying it like a little boy! I never knew that Gurudev was such a good swimmer. I thought with his heavy body, he won't be able to swim. But on the contrary his body had a sort of buoyancy. It was a sight to see! But the Mahant did not enter the water.

Afterwards, we reached the photographer's studio on appointment. Each particular photograph had to be arranged and a tableau had to be made. The photographer took the photographs very patiently. We stayed there for two days. Day time was the photography

and the evenings were free. On our way from the studio to the Shravan-nath Jnana Mandir we had to pass along a narrow lane. From the point of view of the main bazaar, it was a back lane. From the point of view of the canal, it was the front lane and then came the bazaar. Through this narrow lane we had to come. While we were passing the lane we passed a Halwai's shop. He was making hot Jilebis and putting them in syrup. Gurudev looked at it and exclaimed. "Ah! Fresh Jilebis!' He asked the shopkeeper, "Oji! Have you used pure ghee? Is all the stuff pure?" The shopkeeper replied, "Swamiji Maharaj, I have used only the best quality pure ghee." So Gurudev said, "Oji, Paramanandaji, why not have some hot Jilebi?" Swami Paramanandaji looked at him puzzled as Gurudev was diabetic. He said, "Swamiji, how can you eat sweets?" But Gurudev wanted that all of us, Swami Sashwatanandaji, Swami Narayananandaji, Swami Paramanandaji and myself may enjoy the hot Jilebis. So he said, "No problem! Anything can be taken! Place an order."

It was a narrow lane. The shopkeeper gave four leaf-cups with ¼ seer (half a pound) of very hot Jilebis. I was puzzled how to eat Jilebis in an open place on a busy lane. I was watching Gurudev. The shop was at a height. He went to a side, leaned against the opposite wall and started eating a Jilebi standing there! Many people were passing by. But Gurudev was Mast (मस्त) in his own mood and said, "You also eat." It was a sight to see a world-renowned Guru, a towering personality that everyone would notice, four Sannyasis and many disciples all eating hot Jilebis standing in a narrow street! Of course, Gurudev took only a nibble at one or two pieces, and then handed over to someone and washed his hands. But he insisted that we finish everything.

When we returned to the Shravannath Ashram, Gurudev told the Mahantji, "We ate very delicious Jilebis." The Mahantji was puzzled and said, "But you

are diabetic." Gurudev said, "What of that! That is for ever!"

This was another side of his nature. I will now tell you one small incident to show what was his state of self-control. Gurudev's body had become very, very sensitive. He wore an almost transparent very thin cloth Malmal Dhoti. He could not wear more than that in the summer. And when he went to bed, another long piece of Malmal was the only covering. If one has practised Pranayama to a very, very acute extent, his body becomes very sensitive. So his body and skin had become extremely sensitive. Even a little noise is a big noise for such persons. A little touch also disturbs them. Gurudev had told us, if during his sleep by wind or some chance, the cloth of one leg fell upon the other that was enough to disturb his body and he will wake up.

One hot summer day we were having the Satsanga in the open, on the verandah of Bhajan Hall. That day was some special day and special Prasad was distributed. In Satsanga no one was barred; even dogs, monkeys, cows may also come. If someone tried to drive them out, Gurudev would say, "No, no. Let them come!" If someone argued, "Swamiji they sometimes fight and quarrel, growl and scrowl." Gurudev's reply always would be, "Let it be. Let it be." Even monkeys were not be driven away if they came near you.

Cows and calves are not intelligent and so they sometimes even walked through the Satsanga gathering. Gurudev was having Prasad. He was leaning with the support of one hand placed on the floor. When Gurudev was sitting like this a calf started coming. It saw us eating something. So it rushed to us. When it came to the crowd, someone tried to chase away so it got frightened and excited, and it came right through the crowd and went close to Gurudev and then went away. Gurudev suddenly stopped eating and called someone and said, "Let us go."

The calf had put one hoof on Gurudev's finger and it was crushed and the nail had came off. It was blue-black due to contusion. Yet he did not let out a single little sign even once. It must have been terribly painful. It was only when he got up that we saw it. Everyone was upset. Gurudev's attendant and I followed him. On his way to Kutir was the dispensary. He said, "Raoji*! Open the dispensary." I opened the dispensary and put tincture benzoine over it and a benzoine pack and Gurudev went straight to his Kutir. He must have been in physical agony, but nothing showed on his serene countenance and he did not even give a single sign that something had happened, not even some sound from mouth as a reflex action.

These are all little, little things that reveal certain things which are more than little.

* *The pre-monastic name of the speaker was Sridhar Rao and was known as Raoji.*

25

SADHANA IN DAILY LIFE

Remain in the world, but not worldly minded. Aim at perfection in action. This is the best form of Yoga. Be detached in action. Care not for the fruits of actions. Give up agency. Surrender the fruits and actions to the Lord and enjoy the Bliss of the Eternal.

Work cannot bring misery. It is identification and attachment to work that brings all sort of worries, troubles and unhappiness. Work without attachment and identification. You will soon attain God-consciousness.

—Swami Sivananda.

You must live in this world like a water-bird; although the water clings to the bird's feathers, the bird shakes it off. You must live in this world like a mud-fish; although it lives in the mud, its scales are always shining.

—Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.

Beloved and blessed children of the Divine! Fortunate followers, devoted disciples of beloved and worshipful Holy Master Guru Maharaj Swami Sivanandaji, the prophet of this modern age, the proclaimer of the supremacy of spiritual Sadhana in human life, the teacher of Yoga of Synthesis and a saint, sage and Yogi who taught the modern mankind, how to spiritualise the entire normal worldly life, even while fulfilling one's obligations and doing one's duties, simultaneously engaging in spiritual Sadhana, how fulfilling one's obligations and doing one's duties do not

come in the way of smooth unhampered progress of Sadhana.

From the beginning of known human history, there has always been the situation and the problem of the conflict between the secular and the spiritual aspects of the same individual. This has been a part and parcel of spiritual life and spiritual striving of seekers and aspirations right from the beginning of known human history. Read the life of any saint; you will find that there has always been agonising and fermenting conflict and that he was always perpetually tormented by opposing pulls of two different types of duties and they faced the inevitable problem: 'Which one is more important? What I am expected to do? To which should I give preference?'

Gurudev also must have had a period of great conflict just before he renounced his very prosperous professional career in Malaysia and his worldly life and turned his back to the secular outer life and came away into the solitudes of jungles of Swargashram to live a life of seclusion, silence, penance and austerity. Of course, he was a person who by his nature took quick decisions, and also he left no time gap between taking a decision and implementing it. That was something unique and highly admirable about him. That he demonstrated amply in his later life also any number of times. He liked to use the expressions *Phata Phat* and *Dhana Dhan* and the English equivalent in his own inimitable way as **'D.I.N.'** meaning **'Do It Now.'** Nevertheless there must have been a period of acute conflict just before he renounced his secular career and came out here. But from what we know about his nature that conflict might not have been a very long drawn or a prolonged one* as it would normally be in the case of any other normal individual. In Gurudev's case, it might have been a short period of conflict and a quick decision. Once he took a

* *I frequently remembered the Srutivakya, "The day on which one gets Vairagya, that very day one should renounce the world." —Autobiography of Sivananda.*

decision, usually it was a one hundred per cent decision. Afterwards, no wavering, no misgivings, no afterthoughts. When he has decided, it means he has decided it finally. That was the end of the matter.

But it was a part of his own experience. He must have realised that this should be a part and parcel of the spiritual life of all the people. He must have pondered this point deeply even during his Swargashram days, during which the seeker turned into a saint, the Sadhaka became a Siddha and a sage. When this turn came in his life and when God meant him to start sharing and giving, then this experience which he had in his life must have proved very valuable.

It goes to the everlasting credit to Gurudev and his own personal experience that he gave the concept of spiritual life without rejecting the secular life. He realised, it is no use to preach a life of completely rejecting the secular and turning away from the world. This will not be possible for most of the people. They will not be able to resolve this conflict.

Arjuna also had this conflict. The intriguing and peculiar nature of this conflict is: It is not a conflict between doing one's duty and doing something else. The essence of the conflict is the choice between two alternatives. What Lord Krishna wanted to convey and to what He did draw Arjuna's attention was that what Arjuna said was right, but it is the question of choice between two duties:

(1) The duty in a lesser area or plane of one's life and activity, and

(2) The duty in a higher plane of one's life.

As a disciple of very, very venerable teachers, Arjuna owed a great deal to them. He owed to them the very fact that he was leading the Pandava forces and even his success in the eighteen-day War. Had it not been for Dronacharya, Arjuna would have been nowhere either as a warrior or as an archer. If he succeeded in the

Mahabharata War, he owed his success to those persons whom he had to kill—Bhishma Pitamaha, Dronacharya and other venerable elders. They were worshipful and venerable as elders, as teachers. He also owed a duty to other relatives, kith and kin. For a normal human individual of this worldly life, the only duty he knows is of this worldly life, the only duty that he knows is to his relatives, parents and dependents. He does not know of any other duty. To make him conscious of that other duty teachers have to come and tell him, "Look! We are aware of your duties towards your parents, brothers, sisters, relatives, dependents. All right. But there are other duties also. So, don't become completely absorbed in this little narrow circle of your own family confines." You owe a duty towards your neighbour. Don't forget it.

You cannot sweep your house and throw the dust into your neighbour's backyard or garden. You may have no connection, no dealings with them, but nevertheless the very fact that God has put you in the same environment, in the same restricted area, you owe a duty to those who live by your side and proximity. While fulfilling your duty to your family, you must be conscious of your duty towards a wider circle also. Then comes your duty towards the unseen people far off you, if they happen to be a part of the citizens of the same country. And in the ultimate context, you owe a duty towards all living beings, you owe a duty to be kind to all the creatures of God, not to harm or hurt them for your sense-satisfaction. They are also God's children. You may look at them as something lower to you, but in God's eyes they are as much His children as yourself. They say,

कुलस्यार्थं त्यजेत् स्वार्थं ग्रामार्थं कुलं त्यजेत् ।
देशस्यार्थं त्यजेत् ग्रामं विश्वार्थं सर्वं त्यजेत् ।।

In place of विश्वार्थं some say आत्मार्थं or ईशार्थं also. 'Renounce your personal gain for the benefit of the family, the benefits of the family for the village, the benefits of village

for the nation and renounce everything for the universal welfare/for (attaining) Self or God.'

You should renounce yourself for the sake of the welfare of your family, your father, mother, wife, children, dependents, brothers and sisters. To give happiness and comfort to them, you must renounce your selfishness and must be willing to bear discomfort and inconvenience. अतिथि देवो भव। 'Let a guest be (treated as) a deity.' In the context of the Ashram, it means we should be willing to bear discomfort of vacating our room and staying in a common-room for two-three weeks to make guests, invited people comfortable. Their convenience and comfort is a higher duty than securing our own convenience and comfort. In the context of a family, each individual member of the family must be able to renounce his/her selfish comfort and convenience for the welfare and happiness, for the convenience and comfort of the whole family. If it is a question of the welfare of the entire neighbourhood or the entire village, then you must be prepared to forgo the interest of the family. When it comes to the question of the welfare of the entire nation, one should be prepared to sacrifice the welfare of the village.

There is a touching story of the World War I. On the border of France and Germany, there was a much disputed area called Elsab Lothringen. There was a constant ding-dong battle between the two forces. Sometimes the French will occupy the area pushing out the German forces; and sometimes the Germans will occupy the territory and the French had to retreat. Once, the Germans pushed away the French army and occupied the French territory. The French army retreated across the river. The Germans now occupied the strong blockade created by the French and started shooting across the small river. The main problem of the French army was how to dislodge and vacate the Germans from the strongholds of that village, particularly from one house from which very vicious

firing was coming and causing havoc and not allowing the French forces to cross the river. The commanding officer of the French army brought the artillery close to the river bank and inquired his lieutenant, "Who is the best marksman?" Then the best marksman was taken to the front and ordered to direct the shelling to that stronghold house. He repeatedly hit the house and finally it crumbled. When the officer congratulated the marksman for his success, he was in tears. So the officer inquired, "Anything wrong? Are you unwell?" Someone by his side explained, "Sir, the house that was destroyed is this marksman's own house!"

This is renunciation. This is the great choice between two duties. As the head of the family, normally it would have been his duty to protect the house. But he was systematically shelling and destroying his own house because this was the call of a higher duty. Arjuna was in a similar situation. Lord Krishna said: 'This is a Dharmayuddha. It is your duty to carry on this righteous war as the person responsible for the law and order and for getting the land rid off the unrighteousness and for making the righteousness to prevail. You therefore should carry on this War.'

It is not so much a question of what is duty and what is not duty. But is a subtle question of choice between the lesser duty and the higher duty. Which one is more important, insistent and urgent? It took quite some time for Arjuna to realise this because he had also within him a conflict between reason or understanding and sentiment or feeling. Whereas understanding should prevail, it was his feeling that dictated. This made the inner conflict even more acute, more poignant. Ultimately, Lord Krishna was able to make him realise that no matter his feelings even if it means pain, grief, sorrow, but duty is more important. There is saying in Hindi, *Bhavanase Kartavya Bada Hai* (Duty is greater than sentiment).

Gurudev found that everyone with lesser understanding will have the conflict, and so they must be reminded of their higher duties. The highest duty is towards God who has given this golden opportunity of the human birth with the unique and special faculties of feeling, thinking and reasoning.

A study of Gurudev's work is very fascinating. In his earliest works, when he was engaged in his penance in Swargashram, he was absolutely uncompromising in his instructions to the Sadhakas. No question of trying to reconcile and all that. No question at all. He did not mince any words, "Kick aside all these nonsense! Who is father? माता नास्ति पिता नास्ति नास्ति बांधव सहोदर। (There is no mother, no father, no brother/sister)." All that was very, very uncompromising, forthright and fiery. If you read his **How to Get Vairagya** and other earlier works, you may say to yourself, "Oh! Oh! It is so fiery!" His early writings breathe fire. For him the world was just a straw, absolutely nothing! Till the last day, he never, never budged from this position in which he was absolutely convinced and established. It was the same position which was his forthright admonition in the beginning.

In His entire life, Lord Jesus was able to get around Him only twelve disciples. But he went on teaching to the masses, thousands of people, multitudes. He went on addressing them in villages and towns, including the biggest town Jerusalem. He gave His message directly to thousands of people. But only twelve people were able to follow Him.

Gurudev was also made for something special. He was made for Lokasangraha, world awakening. Gurudev came here to give the light of spiritual awareness and awakening to the entire modern mankind. So when he became a world teacher, he became compromising in his teachings. Gurudev realised, "I have to give a message that would enable each and everyone, a man, a woman or even a child to devote himself/herself to spiritual life and

become a seeker, right in the midst of his/her ordinary normal day-to-day life in this world, to follow a spiritual life within the frame-work of normal life and simultaneously with it." That was his special task, and that was his problem also. It was in this context that he shifted his emphasis and evolved this method, "Don't look upon your life as a secular life. Don't regard your home as a bondage or Prapancha. There is nothing secular, everything is sacred. The whole world is indwelled by the presence of the Divine Spirit. Therefore, wherever you are, God is there in all His Fullness. Feel that your home is the abode of God. Feel yourself and your family as servants of God serving the Master of the house, God himself. Whatever you do in your home—washing, cleaning, sweeping, cooking—you are doing His service in the mansion of God. Everything is His. You also belong to Him.

He laid great importance to the changing of the angle of vision. With this changed angle of vision, change in your entire approach to life—your approach to your home, family, work and all that, takes place. You will also become completely changed. There will be a transformation. With this changed angle of vision, you will live your life in a state of detachment, you will think, 'This property, house, car, money and bank-balance are not mine. All these belong to Him. We are only the trustees of His property. All our actions are in His Name. We are His agents, instruments. Not I, Not I, O Lord! Thou, Thou. Everything is Thine. Nothing belongs to me. Nothing here is mine.' You will live like a lotus in the water, right in the midst of water yet absolutely unaffected by it. Anasakti or detachment is the key. Live your life in detachment, do not be attached to anything. Nevertheless, take full interest in your Kartavya Karma. Do your duty sincerely. Fulfil your obligations. But be detached inwardly. Know that you are a lone traveller on the surface of the earth. You have come alone and you will go alone. Nothing is yours. Nothing comes with you.

Always be quite aware that you are a lone traveller and be unattached within. But so far as activity is concerned be skilled. Exercise skill in activity. Gurudev used to bring the Gita in all his teachings again and again.

The skill in activity is: Engage in activity in such a way that it does not bind you, though you are in the midst of activity. Activity should not adhere to you and become a cause of further activity and Karma-phala-bhoga. Take out of the activity the poison, the sting of attachment or the Kartritva Abhimana, the ego of doership. Engage in activity without any specific greed for personal gain out of that activity. Engage in activity as a detached witness without attachment to the fruit of activity, as an instrument in the hands of God not having ego or the sense, 'I am the doer.' Renounce the doership. No ego, no doership, no attachment, no desire for the fruit of action.

These are all negative factors. So bring in some positive factors also. Feel that all your activity is a worship of God. Bring in the attitude of worshipfulness in your activity because God is everywhere around you, the entire Universe is pervaded with His Presence. His all-pervading divinity lies scattered like the sunshine covering everything. Therefore, feel the Presence of God everywhere and bring the attitude of worshipfulness.

The negative aspect of this Sadhana is: Don't have ego of doership. Don't have attachment to activity. Don't have any greed for personal gain. At the same time the positive aspect is: Develop an attitude of worshipfulness—God is everywhere. Wherever I am, whatever I am doing, it is in the presence of God as His Worship. I regard all my mental, verbal and physical activity as worshipful offering to the Lord. It is my way of offering worship to the ever-present cosmic Being.

In no other composition, Stuti or Stotra this has been brought out so explicitly as in the last Sloka of Adi Shankaracharya's Siva-Manasa-Puja Stotra.

आत्मा त्वं गिरिजा मतिः सहचराः प्राणाः शरीरं गृहं
पूजा ते विषयोपभोगरचना निद्रा समाधिस्थितिः।
सञ्चारः पदयोः प्रदक्षिणविधिः स्तोत्राणि सर्वा गिरो
यद्यत् कर्म करोमि तत्तदखिलं शम्भो तवाराधनम् ।।

'O Lord Siva! My body is your temple in which You dwell as my Soul, the Mother Parvati as my intellect and Your assistants as my Pranas. Whatever activity I am doing is Your worship, all my enjoyments are Your devotion, my sleep is the Samadhi state, my movements Your Pradakshina and all my utterances Your prayers.'

Every bit of one's activity is taken into consideration, even enjoying of the normal sense-pleasures. We enjoy a little bit of tasty food in the normal course of appeasing our hunger. We enjoy nice music or nice sunset, a beautiful rainbow and the ever-wandering clouds resting on mountain tops, the moon shimmering in the Ganga upon a full-moon day. We enjoy a hot water bath in winter and a cold shower in summer. We enjoy all these. Even all these are Your worship. He has included everything. Regard speech as His prayer, moving here and there as Pradakshina, circumambulation, even regard sleep as a part of spiritual process and not a mere secular process. All activity is lofty spiritual Sadhana, worshipfulness. In no other composition this supreme concept of spiritualising everything, seeing everything as directly connected with the Divinity and not with this gross material earth plane is so explicit. No other Sloka brings it in greater detail and in a more explicit and specific manner than the concluding Sloka of Siva-Manasa-Puja.

It is a plain truth, not the least exaggeration, that Gurudev literally fulfilled this to the letter. He was literally a living embodiment of absolute personification of this philosophy of seeing Divinity everywhere, spiritualising every activity and engaging in each and every activity—mental, verbal, physical, in the spirit of

worshipfulness and offering it to the Lord, not at the end of the day but from time to time, time to time, *'Brahmarpanam/Sivarpanam/Krishnarpanam/Ramarpa nam Astu'* (Let this be an offering to Brahman/Siva/Krishna/ Rama), several times during the course of the day.

He said, "Recollect yourself and say: 'I am worshipping the cosmic Being, the all-pervading, ever-present Divinity. I offer this worship unto Him at His Feet.' If you do that, you don't have to run to a mountain top or to a far off forest or sit inside a cave. Wherever you are, you are blessed in the company of the Divinity. God is always with you. You are always in God."

Gurudev has said it in a specific way, "Regard the whole world as Vishva Vrindavan." This was for a Krishna devotee. You can as well say, regard the whole world as Kashi or Ayodhya or Bethlehem or Jerusalem or Mecca and regard your town as the temple of God and your home as the Garbhagriha, the innermost sanctum of the temple. Gurudev says, "The whole world is Vishva Vrindavan. Your town the Banke Bihariji's temple, your house is the Garbhagriha where actually Banke Bihariji is present in all His resplendence and thus you always be filled in that plane of divinity, be elevated mentally in that plane and live in that plane only. Let this outer world be a sacred surrounding and not a distraction. Wherever you are, you are in the sacred surroundings." In this way, you should bring about a transformation in your environment, not physically but psychologically. Behold everything in altogether a new light. While you are in Bombay, feel you are no longer in Bombay but in Vrindavan, Kashi or Ayodhya. You create thus a world of your own and you will be no longer in the company of corrupt businessmen, politicians and other people. You are in the company of devotees. Wherever you move, you find all people are devotees, of course, you should bring in a little bit of commonsense and cooperation in this wonderful formula which Gurudev has given you. You

avoid the company of worldly people and be in the company of good people, people who have some principles, ideals or values which they try to follow and fulfil, not necessarily Yogis, saints and philosophers. If you get their company so far the better, the higher and the loftier. But otherwise be in the company of good people. Strictly avoid the company of purely worldly people who have no other goal except to eat, drink and be merry and to accumulate.

In one place, very tellingly Gurudev says:

The enticing worldly objects of enjoyment are terrible temptations. They glitter with outer attractions of Maya. They try to pull you and then enmesh you. They are dangerous enough. But even more dangerous is the company of persons addicted to this type of sense pleasures. The attractive objects of the senses are, no doubt, very dangerous. You have to avoid them. But ten times more dangerous is the company of hedonist and profligate people who are addicted to sense-enjoyments. Although, the sense-objects attract you powerfully with their glamour and glitter and their power of attraction, if you turn your face away from them, they are helpless. They cannot do anything. They do not pursue you. They do not tempt you if you do not go near them. They are there where they are. If you are in your own environment and if there is no contact between you and these sense objects, they are not a big danger. Whereas, the company of those who are in pursuit of this and this alone, those who are addicted to this, will invite, instigate and pursue you, "Come along! I am going to have a bridge and cocktail party, you must come." The sense-objects don't say, "Come, come." It is only due to your own craving for them, your attachment for them that the danger crops up. So far as the sense objects are concerned, the danger lies within you.

You may touch a live charcoal by accident and you may get a little stung or scorched. It will not seriously

injure you. But if you contact a red white hot iron the injury will be much more serious and the wound will take much longer time to heal.

All this has been said by Gurudev in his Spiritual Lessons.

Gurudev's great task was to bring the man into the spiritual life without compelling him to turn away from his entire environment, leaving his world, the family, property, house, profession, etc. "No. Let everything be as it is I will give you a magic philosopher's stone, touch it and everything will be transformed at your door. Your professional life, your domestic life and its activities, your social life and its activities, everything will be spiritualised." The touchstone is:

1) Awareness of God's presence everywhere,
2) A feeling of worshipfulness in your activity, and
3) Dedication of all activities to God, offering them all at the Feet of God as His worship.

These three things combined form the touchstone. It brings

i) a change in the angle of vision,
ii) a Bhava, an approach of worshipfulness and
iii) Ishwararpana, total dedication to God.

So seemingly, life will go on as it is. The beholders from outside will find no change in this man. But the person who has adopted this 'Divine Life Formula' would become a totally transformed being. He creates a world of his own. He lives only to worship and glorify God, to adore Him. Everything he does becomes a part and parcel of that adoration and worship. A pervasive feeling of worshipfulness characterises the life of the person who enters into Gurudev's teachings of Divine Life. He says, "Divinise the entire life. Spiritualise all the activities. Behold everything as permeated and saturated by the Divine Reality."

This is the unique path that Holy Master Swami Sivanandaji has given us. There is no forced break in your normal or spiritual life. There is no violent upsetting of your normal life, but a spiritual quality enters gradually into your normal life and completely transforms it, makes it beautiful, sublime, sacred and holy. That is what Gurudev has given to us. In this, he was both a mixture of a stern teacher, as well as, an understanding saint and a friend, philosopher and guide.

With this, I conclude my talk by drawing your attention to both these aspects. How? You take these two most well-known set of teachings.

1) **Sadhana Tattva** or The Science of Seven Cultures For Quick Evolution of the Human Soul. This is Gurudev's universal teachings for all people. They have been summed up into seven sections and thirty-two paragraphs. In the beginning, there is an Introduction in three paragraphs:

(a) An ounce of practice is better than tons of theory. Practise Yoga, Religion and Philosophy in daily life and attain Self realisation.

(b) These thirty-two instructions... are suitable for modern busy householders... Modify them to suit your convenience and increase the period gradually.

(c) In the beginning take only a few practicable resolves.

Here, Gurudev has warned us against trying to do too much, all of a sudden taking up too many Sadhanas. Don't do that folly of Arambha-suratvam; it is said the new broom sweeps well. You will do it for a few days only. Afterwards, you will find that you cannot cope up with it and will become disheartened and leave the Sadhana altogether. This is a blunder. Don't do it. Select a few of these practices and admonitions and try to incorporate them in your daily life. Gradually, increase the time and add on, little by little some more items. If this process

goes on expanding and enhancing gradually and steadily, then everything will be all right.

2) *Twenty Important Spiritual Instructions*: These special teachings are strictly for Sadhakas already upon the path of spiritual life and Yoga practices. At the end of it, Gurudev says, *"All these spiritual canons must be rigidly observed. You must not give leniency to the mind."* If you give a little leniency to the mind, finished. It will take full advantage of it and pull you down. If you give your little finger, it will catch hold of the entire arm and pull you down. So these spiritual canons must strictly be adhered to by all the Sadhakas. If the mind tries to play any tricks, bring it to heel, punish it. Gurudev has suggested a number of self-punishments: Extra Japa standing, denying night meal. Gurudev himself took recourse to a special type of discipline—S.B. 44, that is, shoe-beating to oneself 44 times. When on a special grand gala day like birthday, a lot of people came and garlanded him, flower garlands, brocade garlands, sandalwood garlands and all that. He took to suffer all that to satisfy the devotees. When the whole thing was over, he would go inside his Kutir and would go to the bathroom and sit in a corner. He had a pair of old shoes. He used to hold one in his hand and admonish his mind, "Big teacher! Flowers, garlands, adoration. Now take a little sample of this also." He used to say, "I used to beat myself with the shoe on the head just to bring, whatsoever likelihood of ego there may be, to its proper place once again." He used to do it as his routine also. In a previous chapter, I have brought to your notice, how Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa went into the huts of scheduled caste people and cleaned the floor to wipe out his ego, with his own hair.

Gurudev has advised self-punishment for Sadhakas like us. He used to give example of Mahatma Gandhiji and how he used to punish himself if he had to correct himself. Gurudev was also fond of alluding the life of

Benjamin Franklin, a self-made man of United States of America.

This was Gurudev's special teachings to us all: Do not be distressed. There is no conflict once you take recourse to divinising your entire life, spiritualising each and everyone (even the least one also) of your activities. Ever feel the presence of the Divine. Live in the awareness: "God is in me. I am in God." Wherever you are, you thus make that place a heaven.

I close my talk by mentioning two admonitions from *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas A' Kempis.

•Live each day as though it were the last day to live on this earth. You try to fill it as much as possible with all the good that you can, all the wonderful and noble things you can think, say and do.

•Even while you are on the earth, live as though you have already attained the heaven and you were living in the presence of the most high.

Suppose you are in the heaven, would you do anything which you would normally do on earth? If you are on the sideways and have the inclination of spitting, you may do so anywhere. But supposing you are inside the Vishwanath Temple, would you ever spit? Suppose you are inside Gurudev's Kutir, will this impulse ever come? So the effect of the feeling that you are already in the presence of the most high, even while living on the earth is that you would not do anything gross or unworthy of the sanctity of that precinct, that place, that presence.

This little guidelines that Thomas Kempis gave us resemble closely to Gurudev's admonitions to us.

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IDEAL PLACE FOR SADHANA

What greater good fortune is there for the human being than to be born with a power to think, feel and reason? Otherwise, physically and biologically speaking we are mere animals with hunger and thirst, fatigue and sleep, heat and cold, sense appetites and the survival instinct, instincts of procreation and self-protection. Hunger, sleep and fear are common traits in men as well as in animals. What raises men high above all the rest of living beings is the power to think, feel, reflect, reason, discriminate, sympathise. To be born with this status is a great blessedness. It is our distinct good fortune to have the conscious awareness that life is not merely physical activities and psychological processes, but it is much more, its meaning is much beyond the phenomenal plane. It partakes of the dimension transcending the mundane physical plane of existence into that Parabhoomika and Adhyatma-bhoomika, the transcendental and spiritual dimensions, the dimension of the cosmic Being, the Eternal Verity, the Universal Spirit which is beginningless and endless, eternal and imperishable. It is beyond your physical and psychological self, your movements and activities. You shine radiantly, resplendently apart from the mundane plane activities, distinct from them, yet as if involved in them.

Vedanta says, this feeling of being involved in them is only your ignorance, your imagination, your dream. There can actually be no involvement, it is only an apparent, a seeming involvement. Let there be a crystal ball absolutely clear and transparent. Bring a red coloured cloth near it; the entire ball seems to have

become red sphere, bring a blue coloured cloth near it, the whole crystal seems to have become a blue sphere. This is because of the proximity of the coloured object only. No change has actually taken place in the crystal. Due to the proximity of a coloured object, the colour of the object seems to have transformed the crystal into a coloured one. But it is a seeming change only.

Thus, the Vedanta tries to explain that your seeming to be a physical or a psychological being is a Bhranti (illusion)*. Truly speaking it is another dimension, the dimension of your being which does not partake of the physical or psychological being is your real Self and It is one with the cosmic Reality. To be endowed with such a conscious awareness even in the form of a faint glimmer is a very rare, highest good fortune. Only the Grace of God and the blessings of saints and sages bring this higher awareness within the range of normal human consciousness. This higher awareness is: 'I am not merely a perishable body of flesh and bones, I am not merely a name and form personality, I am not merely a bundle of desires or thoughts, emotions and feelings or imaginations and memories. I am something much more than that. I am unborn, deathless, changeless. I am the eternal, imperishable.' So you begin to understand the implication of

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ।।

'He is not born nor does He ever die; after having been He never ceases to be. Unborn, eternal,

* *There are five types of illusions with regards to the self, the Self and the Brahman: 1. The illusion that the Self is different from the Brahman. 2. The Self is neither the doer nor the enjoyer. Though Its involvement is only apparent and not real, the illusion that the Self is the doer and enjoyer. 3. The illusion that I am the body. 4. The illusion that the Brahman is not changeless. 5. The illusion that the world is distinct from Brahman and is real.*

changeless and ancient, He is not killed when the body is killed' (Gita II-20).

You are endowed with that conscious awareness, you have started seeking realisation of That, you are on the spiritual path. One may find millions of peddling things and fishes on sea shore, but to get one gem is very difficult. You are like that gem amongst vast, vast masses of people living on earth. To the great many, the very existence of life beyond the physical and mental life is a thing of which they have absolutely no idea. They have no idea of the spiritual life and that Reality. For them, this world is the only reality. That is the only life they know of.

You are blessed and endowed with such awareness and to have come into the holiest of the holy places in the blessed, sacred India, the Uttarakhanda, on the right bank of holy Ganga and at the feet of the great Himalaya, in Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji's Ashram and participating in the Satsanga. Saint Tulasidas says, "Anyone can have money, wealth, fields, property, house, family, but it is difficult to obtain the opportunity of hearing the glories of God and the company of spiritual people, devotees of God, seekers." Even a dacoit, smuggler, a black- marketeer, a kidnapper can have all that money can buy. But the company of devotees and Sadhakas and the discourses on the supreme Reality are very, very difficult to obtain.

So you may ponder for a while and try to grasp the true significance of your present situation. What a wonderful good fortune it is! It is in the context of this good fortune, we have been trying to appraise the life and teachings of that great man who has made all these things possible for us. He has granted to us all this good fortune, as well as, this awakening, this higher awareness, the desire for Its Experience, this Ashram and this Satsanga. He has made everything possible without our having to strive for it, without our having to

make any exertion for it. You can have plenty of everything, as much as you can have. If you want to have the Vedanta, the Jnana Yoga, here you can have it. If you are a Bhakti-margi and want to have Bhajan, Kirtan, you can have it here. If you want to do selfless service, you can do it here. If you want to hear about concentration, meditation, Realisation, you can have it here. If you want to engage yourself in the spiritual Sadhana and do Anushthana, Purascharana, Japa, Sankirtan, you can do it here; you can read in the library, do Svadhyaya, get your doubts cleared. If you want to do Upasana, you can do it here. You can engage yourself in any type of practical spiritual Sadhana here. So, it is a blessing of full value and worth, the significance of which can be grasped and understood only if you take time to pause, and think and reflect on it. Gurudev made all this possible, because he did not seclude himself. If he had made his Ashram in Neelakantha, this would not have been possible. But he made the Ashram on the cross-roads, on the spot where millions come from all the parts of the world, year after year. Perhaps the only country from which people do not come is our neighbour China*. Though a Chinese intellectual, Prof. Tong Yuong Shaan, Professor of Buddhism and Contemporary Religions, Allahabad University, was a regular correspondent and a regular visitor. Gurudev had sent all his books to him and when he passed away, his wife wrote to Gurudev requesting to continue to send the Divine Life magazine. He was brought into contact of Gurudev by Dr. Mohammed Hafiz Syed, Head of the Department of Philosophy, Allahabad University. He was a great devotee of Gurudev and was regularly contributing articles to the Divine Life and unfailingly to the special September issues. He was a very learned but a very simple man. Though he was a philosopher of

* *Swami Shraddhananadaji was a Chinese settled in Malaysia. He spent his last days in the Ashram.*

standing he would have discussions and arguments with Gurudev. He was always wanting to know and asked questions and did criticise too, raised doubts also. He would not accept anything without questioning, he asked for reasons. Gurudev was very happy with both of them.

THE SILENT TEACHINGS

Sit before your spiritual preceptor or any Mahatma quietly and meditate. Let the Soul speak to soul. All your doubts will be cleared by themselves. You will have good spiritual experiences. You will experience ineffable Peace and a thrill of Joy in your heart. This is the real way for attaining the Goal of life.

—Swami Sivananda.

He is a mass of Bliss, Bliss that is unalloyed. None can dream of evil in Siva's presence. Evil flies away, Satan takes to his heels, passion dies, anger perishes, and the rogue becomes a saint in the presence of sweet and Blissful Siva.

—Swami Krishnananda.

Persons of high eminence, Presidents of India, Deputy Premier of the U.S.S.R. and many others visited the Ashram. The Ashram is on the highway leading to the holiest places of pilgrimage in the Uttarakhanda—Triyugi Narayana, Kedarnath, Tunganath, Hemkund, Badrinath.

Let us try to understand that large-hearted person who as it were, at one stroke showered unutterable good fortune on all the seekers. Gurudev was a person on whom honour, homage, tribute, high praise, veneration, respect, etc., were no burden. They were showered on him without affecting his inner simplicity, serenity and humility. They rested lightly on his personality. He did not like to sit on heavy cushion seat. He would say. "This sort of special seat pricks me. Take it away." So, if we had put a special seat for him, the first thing that he would do

before sitting was to remove it. He would remove it and then only sit.

He had not the habit of delivering lectures or making us sit in front of him and do teaching. No class, no lesson, no personal instructions, no oratory. On three or four occasions, at the supplication of his disciples, he did speak. When he spoke, he thundered, he minced no matters, he was forthright and came down heavily, and at the same time he was most inspiring. He swept us off our feet and uplifted us to sublime heights. What were those occasions? They were (i) Guru Purnima (ii) Birthday anniversary on September 8th (iii) New Year eve, that is December 31st, —he sometimes spoke at midnight.

He gave a written message on every special occasion almost every month. It started with Makara Sankranti message on January 14th, Mahasivaratri in February, Vasant Panchami in March, Rama Navami in April. Also on Hanuman Jayanti, Buddha Purnima, Janmashtami, Durga Puja. But he confined to only three occasions for speaking. Sometimes, he spoke on two other occasions also. The two Sadhana weeks. But that was left to his sweet will. There were two Sadhana weeks during Easter and Christmas holidays. But the schedules of the Sadhana weeks never mentioned any item like 'Talk by Gurudev.' In those days, the early morning prayer-meditation session was at 4.00 a.m. People were up by 3.00 or 3.30 a.m. and after bath/wash, etc., they would be present in the Bhajan Hall before 4.00 a.m. It was all dark outside as well as inside the Bhajan Hall. There was no electricity in those days. There was Akhanda Kirtan of Maha Mantra, so there was like in ancient Greece and Rome an Akhanda Jyoti, a little cotton-wick flame in a small earthen dish. That flame was always there, day and night, in one corner. Except that the rest of the Hall was in complete darkness. The morning prayers started with Jai Ganesh Kirtan, Guru Stotras, Shantipath and all that. Swami Narayana-

nanda, Swami Poornabodhendra, Swami Saswatanandaji Maharaj, Swami Nijabodhananda (who settled in Varanasi later and passed away on 3rd August 1987), they were in-charge of all that just as our Swami Devanandaji is now. Then there was Nama-Sankirtan, reading, etc.

There was no special place or seat for Gurudev, when he came, he sat in one corner like anyone else. No ostentation, no waiting for honour, nor trying to find out a seat. He would quietly sit in a corner and no one would even know it. But as the routine items came to an end, and the Kirtan was about to start, the silence was suddenly broken by very, very loud and long drawn Pranavas "O...m..., O...m..., O...m..." What was that? Gurudev had come and sat in a corner, and suddenly came the loud, long drawn Pranavas, and he drew himself to full height and we found he was towering above us all. He never liked to deliver a talk sitting, that was not his style. Whenever he spoke, he spoke standing only, as long as he was in normal health uptill 1954. After that, he was not keeping well due to old age he was unable to stand and had no alternative. Even on the stage also, he would deliver his speech standing. We had a Parliament of World Religions in 1953, near the Pillar. He pushed back the chair and stood up and talked. He used to say, "I feel free standing, I feel expanded." No one knew, when suddenly during his talk, he may do Kirtan raising his hands over head, or even start dancing in a mood of ecstasy! There was no knowing, what mood will carry him off and what he would do next! That was his nature.

He did not like any formalities. Once we were going down after a class. In those days, there were already 22 to 24 wooden steps. A part of way we had to walk on a slope and then midway onwards were made very broad, series of railway sleepers type deodar (Himalayan cedar) wooden steps and they were painted too. While we were going down, Gurudev was pleased to engage us in some

discussion about the manuscript of some book. He had a bag in which was the latest part of the manuscript that he had written. As he was talking, he wanted to make out some point by showing me the manuscript. So he simply sat on the steps where he was. He never thought, "I am the founder-head of the Divine Life Society, founder of this Trust, chairman of that Trust, President of that one..." In the middle of the staircase where we were talking, he simply sat in the most natural, spontaneous, informal manner.

I had told you about a very eminent I.C.S. Officer who was a devotee of revered Swami Tapovanji and Gurudev, and who was visiting the Ashram often. After his conversation with Gurudev both of them stepped out of the office. The man was looking here and there for his peon, because he was in the habit of having his shoes put by his peon. Gurudev sized up the situation in seconds and immediately brought the shoes and put before the officer. That devotee officer was simply shocked. But Gurudev put him to ease by saying, "No. No matter please." Gurudev was spontaneous in his simplicity and humility. It was his normal nature as much as it is of the Sun to shine, wind to blow or the water to make something wet. The very next moment he was his normal self. He never thought or felt that he had done something special. As I was present there, I still have the memory of that incident distinctly. It was an object lesson to be cherished, remembered and followed all the life. Sometimes, when this comes naturally to me, it is not Chidananda, but it is Swami Sivananda manifesting in me.

When sometimes someone honoured Gurudev or managed to touch his feet, he would say, "Oh! Please, finish this drama too." For him the whole world and all the outward actions was a drama. But so far as we are concerned, anything put by Gurudev is a genuine stuff, a sort of sermon he gave. He never said, "Oji! Come, I will teach you Vedanta!" He did not hold any class. He did not

make us sit and give discourses. However, if we went on looking for it, each little act of his was a lesson. If one understands this, then only he would be able to appreciate what Gurudev has put into us.

Fortunate were those few who were writing his '**Day-to-day***.' I don't know who commenced it first, but may be Swami Venkatesanandaji. There were at least eight disciples who wrote it, Swami Atmanandaji, Swami Gurusharanandaji, Yogi Ananda of Trinidad. They were very, very fortunate, because for writing this, they were keenly observing Gurudev and they were absorbed and grasped in these silent teachings of Gurudev. These silent teachings were even more fundamental and deeper than all the books that Gurudev has written.

* *Sivananda, Day-to-day. Vol. 1 to 32.*

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CONTEMPORARY SAINTS

I know him, I love him; I have been looking at his activities and progress with a gladdening heart for the last so many years. We are very closely connected with each other by mutual love and respect. He in course of time became a great master of divine life by his spiritual attainments and activities.

—Swami Tapovanji Maharaj.

There used to live a very, very austere Mauni Yogi Swami Ramakrishnanandaji in Vaikuntha Ashram belonging to the Punjab Sindh Kshetra. He was a disciple of Baba Mangal Nath, a very great saint and Titikṣhu. He was the spiritual preceptor of the Manager or Head of the Punjab Sindh Kshetra in Rishikesh. His Ashram is near Sesha Dhara, Lakshman Kund. If you descend down that path, there comes a bifurcation. One road goes to Sesha Dhara and the other to Vaikuntha Ashram. He did not speak to anyone. He had taken a vow never to look at ladies. He did not allow any lady to enter the Ashram. His Ashram used to be locked from outside. At midday, a devotee of his who lived in the Mangal Nath Ashram came with his food. The devotee would open the gate and immediately after entering would close the gate and bolt it and then only he would go down to give the food. Only this devotee had the entry to the Ashram. Also, there was a very learned man, Prof. Gopinathji, the Manager of the Punjab Sindh Kshetra whose duty was to go to the Swamiji and read out some scripture for about forty-five minutes in the morning and similarly in the afternoon. He was doing this very, very regularly. After his death Pandit Pundarikacharya of Darshan Mahavidyalaya was

doing this daily reading. The Swamiji was a very, very dignified person with a flowing white beard and a mane like a lion. He simply sat there and listened. Once in a year, on the Guru-Purnima day his devotees were allowed to come and see him. On Guru-Purnima the door was open from the morning till the afternoon and people could go to him. Ladies had to stand on the road-side to have his glimpse. In those days there was hardly any traffic on this road. He used to come and sit in the open courtyard and give an audience. But he did not speak.

We cannot predict anything about these great people, about their actions, their behaviour. Sometimes, he had an inner fancy and came out when the devotee brought his food, he suddenly would walk out and come to our Ashram. I have seen him suddenly walk into the Ashram. In those days, the office was in the present post office and the kitchen was adjacent to it. We six-seven persons used to sit in a circle inside the kitchen for taking our food. There was no bell, nor any fixed time. Outside the kitchen there was bare earth and then the open road. When Gurudev came out of his Kutir, he came along the road upto the steps just opposite the sales department of the Pharmacy (now Ganga Kutir) and will come along that little dirt-track to his office. There was a cement bench between the kitchen and the office. Swami Ramakrishnanadaji Maharaj sometimes came there spontaneously. He came between 10.30 and 11.00 in the morning*. When he came, immediately Gurudev would leave the office and come out with folded hands. They would mutually enquire about each other's health and welfare, all by signs only. Gurudev would then say, "O Swamiji! Please accept the Bhiksha also." Swami Ramakrishanandaji would nod his head and Gurudev would call the whole Ashram. One fellow would put a gunnysack piece on the cement bench as a seat, and

* *Now there is a big dining hall on the upper side of the Ashram and exactly at 11.00 a.m. and at 6.30 p.m. in the winter and 7.00 p.m. in summer there is a long bell to inform all.*

another disciple would go inside and bring the Bhiksha, two of us will stand with bamboo sticks to guard against the monkeys and Gurudev would also stand there with the stick in his hand and conversing with him. The two were quite opposite. One was a Mauni staying in complete seclusion and the other was a very great mixer, sociable and seemingly extrovert. And yet each admired the nature of the other. The Mauni did not think that the other man was very talkative and too much engaged with people in different activities. No. He understood the qualities of Gurudev's activities. And Gurudev also highly admired the seclusion, the silence, the austerity, the simplicity of life of the Mauni. There was the perfect recognition of the importance and greatness of each other in them. Their meeting was a sight to see.

* * *

The Vidya-Guru of the world renowned Sri Swami Chinmayanandaji Maharaj of Chinmaya Mission, Sandipani Sadhanalaya is Swami Tapovanji Maharaj of Uttar Kashi. He was a great spiritual personality of the Uttara Khanda. Highly learned, erudite Mahatma, a great Tyagi and Virakta. He has written his experiences in an autobiographical vein in Ishwar Darhshan. He had written it in Sanskrit and later on, it was translated in English and Hindi. In the whole book, he refers to himself in third person only. He is very frank in it. He clarifies, "While writing I have to state my observations. Sometimes it may look as though, I am being a little egotistic in giving my opinion and passing judgment. But it is not so." So he has made this clear. In his book, he has given a little glimpse about Gurudev.

On reaching Rishikesh, it was a place called Nai Jhadi that Swamiji (Swami Tapovanji) took up his residence. There Sri Govinda Giri, a devotee of Sri Ramana Maharshi had built an Ashram called Ramanashram. He was eager to serve Swamiji as well. In that dilapidated hut on the bank of Ganga he passed a

few days without any worry. But as there was no alternative he shifted to a neighbouring hut. In that old, decayed, crumbling hut there was room only for a single person to stretch himself. But with the loving cooperation of other Sadhus he repaired the hut and made it habitable. He lived there in the joy of Self, the eternal, unsurpassed beyond the reach of the senses. Even in the benumbing cold, he had his bath in the Ganga early every morning. (Even when it was very cold and though he was from far South.) He satisfied himself through Bhiksha. He passed his days in solitude. He rejected even the offerings of the necessaries of life brought by his devotees. He seldom moved out of his residence and declined to attend the receptions accorded to other Sadhus or partake of feasts (special free meals). He spoke a little. In view of these strict habits and the strict observance of monastic rules, other Sadhus began to refer to him respectfully as 'Virakta', a man of no attachment.

At the request of two Malayalee Sadhus belonging to Sri Ramakrishna order and a few other Sannyasins, Swamiji devoted two hours for the teaching of the Upanishads and other works in Vedanta. At the same time, he regularly attended the discourses held at Kailas Ashram on Brihadaranyaka Upanishad Bhashya. Thus days passed happily in spiritual discussions and the vision of the Self.

In a place like Rishikesh thronged with thousands of Sadhus and their devotees, Swamiji's fame gradually began to spread. It is true, Swamiji dislikes boasting yet he is compelled by context to make statements which would smack of self-exhalation. Boasting is a sin and Swamiji was ever eager to avoid it. Yet, if he is constrained to say things which would sound as self-praise, readers will in their magnanimity forgive him.

The most prominent among the Sannyasis of Rishikesh at the time for their erudition as well as character were Sri Swami Advaitananda of Gujarat, Sri Swami Swayam Jyoti, Sri Swami Sivanandaji of Tamil Nadu and the famous great scholar of Sanskrit Sri Swami Krishnacharya.

All they became Swamiji's (Tapovanji's) intimate friends. Swamiji had made his acquaintance with Swami Sri Sivanandaji, the famous Founder President of the Divine Life Society, as early as when Swamiji stayed in Brahmananda Ashram. (How they came close to each other is put here very interestingly.)

Once, while Swamiji was residing somewhere below Brahmananda Ashram (that Kutir he always kept for himself much later also, even when he had gone to Uttar Kashi. When it became very cold in some winters, he came down and occupied that Kutir), Sri Swami Sivanandaji came to him one day at noon and said in English, "A Bengali Sadhu is residing with me (in Swargashram). For the last few days, he has been very ill. Just to give him, I want a little milk. I am going from Ashram to Ashram for a few ounces but it has not been available. There is no way to get it, except on payment from some shop. If only I had two annas*."

Sri Swami Tapovanji too had been depending entirely on Bhiksha and kept no money of his own. Yet somehow, he managed to get four annas and with humble prostrations, handed over to Sri Swami Sivanandaji praising his great kindness and his love for service. Swamiji wholeheartedly admired and respected Swami Sivananda for his loving acts of kindness and noble qualities. When Swamiji met such friends they carried on discourses on Vedanta.

* * *

So this was Gurudev in whose grand Ashram we are sitting. Now here is this marbled Samadhi Mandir and

* *One anna = 6 paise or 1/16th rupee.*

the marbled Vishwanath Mandir; and in those days he had not even two annas to purchase milk for some sick Sadhu, and had to move around a lot leaving his penance.

Gurudev used to say, "I am not carrying on this work. It is that Ancient Man of the Upanishad who is carrying on the work through me." Who is that Ancient Man?

वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तम् आदित्य वर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ।

'I know this great Purusha who shines like the sun beyond darkness (of ignorance)' (Svetasvatara Up. III-8).

The Purana Purusha of the Vedas is that Ancient Man. That is how Gurudev was! He was totally devoid of the sense of doership and ego, and considered himself as an agent of the great One! Upto the very last day Gurudev maintained that simplicity of heart and meekness of spirit so far as his interior was concerned.

In our school days there was a poem of "Dara" in our text book. Dara, an ordinary man rises to a very high eminence and becomes the confidant of Badshah of Bagdad. He was an ordinary shepherd in the desert. When the Badshah's caravan was lost in the desert, he showed him the way. Highly pleased with his act, the Badshah takes him to Bagdad. He rises to great eminence and so other courtiers became jealous of him. They tell the Badshah that whenever Dara is sent out for some royal work, he always carries with him a chest on the camel that follows him immediately and does not allow anyone to open it. He must be taking out in it, wealth from the royal treasury. The Badshah says, "He is absolutely incorruptible and dependable." But when the Badshah is told about it again and again, he finally asks Dara. Dara replies, "Yes, your Highness! I do carry with me a chest." The Badshah orders to bring that chest and asks Dara to open it. The chest is opened and all are stunned to see the contents, a shepherd's old clothes

which Dara used to wear! Not a single thing other than that. The Badshah asks. "What is this? Why do you always carry it with you?" Dara replies, "I have kept it as a reminder of my status. I daily see it before going to bed so that I do not become arrogant or proud." All the courtiers are amazed. Those who tried to scandalise him are all silenced.

Gurudev was like that. For two annas he roamed around for several miles, approached several people so as to help a sick Sadhu. When he rose to eminence and the Divine Life Society became known world over, he remained the same old self and lived in a very simple, austere life in the same old Kutir. "God has given all this. It belongs to Him. I am a simple Sannyasin."—that was the spirit in which he lived all his life.

I thank Swami Sivananda Centenary Celebration Central Committee for giving me this opportunity, because, I am not a speaker nor have I much knowledge. But Gurudev is a subject close to my heart, and so, so many ideas came once the mind was in that line and we could share something worthwhile.

May Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's blessings be upon you all. May his grace and the light of his teachings illuminate your heart and your life and actions, and may lead you to the Goal in this very life. That is my earnest prayer at the concluding of this Seva offered unto you in the form of this sharing.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX (i)

DAILY ROUTINE

(A) For Students

	From	*To*
Asana, Pranayama	4.00 a.m.	4.25 a.m.
Trataka, Japa, Meditation	4.25 a.m.	5.00 a.m.
Study	5.00 a.m.	6.30 a.m.
Physical Exercises and breakfast	6.30 a.m.	7.00 a.m.
Mantra Writing	7.00 a.m.	7.15 a.m.
Study of the Gita	7.15 a.m.	7.30 a.m.
Preparation of class lessons	7.30 a.m.	9.00 a.m.
Bath, Meals	9.00 a.m.	10.00 a.m.
School	10.00 a.m.	5.00 p.m.
Games, Walking, Nishkama Karma	5.00 p.m.	5.45 p.m.
Japa and Dhyana	5.45 p.m.	6.45 p.m.
Study	6.45 p.m.	8.15 p.m.
Meals	8.15 p.m.	8.30 p.m.
Svadhyaya (study of religious books)	8.30 p.m.	9.00 p.m.
Kirtan, Prayers	9.00 p.m.	9.15 p.m.
Self-analysis, introspection, Spiritual diary	9.15 p.m.	9.30 p.m.
Sleep	9.30 p.m.	4.00 a.m.

(B) For Busy People

	From	*To*
Asana, Pranayama	4.00 a.m.	4.30 a.m.
Trataka, Japa, Dhyana	4.30 a.m.	6.00 a.m.
Physical Exercises and breakfast	6.00 a.m.	6.45 a.m.
Mantra writing	6.45 a.m.	7.00 a.m.
Study of the Gita	7.00 a.m.	7.15 a.m.
Study of spiritual books	7.15 a.m.	8.00 a.m.
Nishkama Karma, household duties	8.00 a.m.	9.00 a.m.
Bath, meals, going to office	9.00 a.m.	10.00 a.m.
Office hours	10.00 a.m.	5.00 p.m.
Evening walk, Nishkama Karma	5.00 p.m.	6.30 p.m.
Japa and Dhyana	6.30 p.m.	7.45 p.m.
Meals	7.45 p.m.	8.15 p.m.
Kirtan, Bhajan, prayers	8.15 p.m.	8.30 p.m.

Study of spiritual books	8.30 p.m.	9.15 p.m.
Atmavichara, self-analysis, spiritual diary	9.15 p.m.	10.00 p.m.
Sleep	10.00 p.m.	4.00 a.m.

(C) For Retired People

	From	*To*
Trataka, Japa, Dhyana	3.45 a.m.	5.45 a.m.
Asana, Pranayama	5.45 a.m.	6.30 a.m.
Walking, rest, breakfast	6.30 a.m.	7.30 a.m.
Mantra writing	7.30 a.m.	7.45 a.m.
Study of the Gita, Bhagavata, Ramayana	7.45 a.m.	9.00 a.m.
Nishkama Karma	9.00 a.m.	10.00 a.m.
Japa, worship	10.00 a.m.	11.00 a.m.
Meals and rest	11.00 a.m.	1.30 p.m.
Study of spiritual books, writing	1.30 p.m.	3.30 p.m.
Satsanga, Sravana	3.30 p.m.	5.00 p.m.
Evening walk and exercise	5.00 p.m.	6.00 p.m.
Japa, Dhyana	6.00 p.m.	7.30 p.m.
Meals and rest	7.30 p.m.	8.15 p.m.
Bhajan, Kirtan	8.15 p.m.	8.45 p.m.
Atma Vichara, Self-analysis, spiritual diary	8.45 p.m.	10.00 p.m.
Sleep	10.00 p.m.	3.45 a.m.

(D) For Whole-time Aspirants

	From	*To*
Japa and Dhyana	3.30 a.m.	6.30 a.m.
Asana, Pranayama	6.30 a.m.	7.45 a.m.
Svadhyaya	7.45 a.m.	8.45 a.m.
Nishkama Karma	8.45 a.m.	10.30 a.m.
Japa, worship	10.30 a.m.	11.45 a.m.
Meals and rest	11.45 a.m.	2.00 p.m.
Mantra-writing	2.00 p.m.	3.00 p.m.
Svadhyaya	3.00 p.m.	4.00 p.m.
Nishkama Karma	4.00 p.m.	5.00 p.m.
Physical exercise or walking	5.00 p.m.	6.00 p.m.
Japa and Dhyana	6.00 p.m.	8.00 p.m.
Bhajan, Kirtan	8.00 p.m.	9.00 p.m.
Atma Vichara, Self-analysis, Introspection, spiritual diary	9.00 p.m.	9.30 p.m.
Sleep	9.30 p.m.	3.30 a.m.

Note: • Spiritual Diary must be kept up by all spiritual aspirants irrespective of age, caste, position in life.

• Every member should observe Mauna daily at least for one hour between 7.00 a.m. and 7.00 p.m.

• A similar routine must be prepared by all spiritual aspirants according to time, temperament and inclination.

• On holidays more time must be given for Japa, Dhyana, concentration, Nishkama Karma Yoga, Mauna, etc.

An Ideal Time-Table of an Aspirant

	Hrs.Min		Hrs.Min
Sleep	7.00	Pranayama	0.10
Walk	1.30	Japa and Meditation	2.00
Mauna	0.15	Food and rest	3.00
Study of the Gita and other scriptures	4.00	Nishkamya Seva	3.00
		Bhajan-Kirtan	0.45
Bath etc.	1.00	Mantra writing	0.30
Asana and exercises	0.50		

RESOLVES FOR QUICK SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

1. Maintain a Daily Spiritual Diary.

2. Keep a daily Mantra notebook and regularly write a page or two of your Ishta Mantra.

3. Chalk out a routine for daily practice and stick to it at any cost.

4. Make a few resolves for practice. Alterations may be made to suit the individual temperament, convenience or stage of development.

5. If you fail in any of the resolves through lack of self-control, unknowingly or by force of circumstances, you should perform some Maalas of Japa or give up one meal to remind yourself of the resolves (self-punishment).

THE RESOLVE FORM

1. I will perform Asanas and Pranayamas for _____ minutes daily.

2. I will take milk and fruits only in lieu of night meals once a week/fortnight.

3. I will observe fast on Ekadasi days or once a month.

4. I will give up _____ (one of my cherished objects of enjoyment) once every _____ days or for _____ days/months.

5. I will not indulge in _____ (cards/cinemas/novels) more than once every _____ days/months or for _____ months.

6. I will observe Mauna for _____ minutes/hours daily and _____ minutes/hours on Sundays/holidays and utilise the time in Japa, meditation, introspection.

7. I will observe Brahmacharya for _____ weeks/ months at a time.

8. I will not utter angry or harsh words towards anyone.

9. I will speak truth at all costs.

10. I will not entertain hatred or evil thoughts towards anyone.

11. I will give _____ per cent of my income in charity.

12. I will do selfless service for _____ hours daily/weekly.

13. I will do _____ Maalas of Japa daily.

14. I will write my Ishta Mantra in a notebook daily for _____minutes or _____ pages.

15. I will study _____ Slokas of the Gita daily with meaning.

16. I will maintain a daily spiritual diary.

17. I will get up at _____ a.m. daily and spend _____ minutes/hours in Japa, meditation, prayers, etc.

18. I will conduct Sankirtan with family members and friends daily for _____ minutes/hours at night.

19. Any other:

Date: Signature

Address: Name

TWENTY IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTIONS

These twenty instructions contain the very essence of all Yoga Sadhana. They are the key to quick development.

1. **Brahmamuhurta:** Get up at 4 a.m. daily. This is Brahmamuhurta which is extremely favourable for meditation on God. Do Sadhana.

2. **Asana:** Sit on Padma, Siddha or Sukha Asana for Japa and meditation for half an hour, facing the east or the north. Increase the period gradually to three hours. Do Sirshasana and Sarvangasana for keeping up Brahmacharya and health. Take light physical exercise as walking, etc., regularly. Do twenty Pranayamas.

3. **Japa:** Repeat any Mantra as pure Om or Om Namo Narayanaya, Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya, Om Saravanabhavaya Namah, Sita Ram, Sri Ram, Hari Om, or Gayatri, according to your taste or inclination, from 108 to 21,600 times daily.

4. **Dietetic Discipline:** Take Sattvic food, Suddha Ahara. Give up chillies, tamarind, garlic, onion, sour articles, oil, mustard, asafoetida. Observe moderation in diet (Mitahara). Do not overload the stomach. Give up those things which the mind likes best for a fortnight in a year. Eat simple food. Milk and fruits help concentration. Take food as medicine to keep the life going. Eating for enjoyment is sin. Give up salt and sugar for a month. You must be able to live on rice, Dhal and bread without any chutney. Do not ask for extra salt for Dhal and sugar for tea, coffee or milk.

5. **Meditation Room:** Have a separate meditation-room under lock and key.

6. **Charity:** Do charity regularly, every month, or even daily according to your means or ten paise per rupee. Never fail in this.

7. **Svadhyaya:** Study systematically the Gita, the Ramayana, the Bhagavatam, the Vishnu-Sahasranama, the Lalita-Sahasranama, the Aditya Hridaya, the Upanishads, the Yoga Vasishtha, the Bible, the Imitation of Christ, the Zend Avesta, the Koran, the Tripitakas, the Granth Sahib, etc., from half an hour to one hour daily and have Suddha Vichara (pure thoughts).

8. **Brahmacharya:** Preserve the vital force (Veerya) very, very carefully. Veerya is God in motion or manifestation (Vibhuti). Veerya is all power. Veerya is all money. Veerya is the essence of life, thought and intelligence.

9. **Elevate the Mind:** Get by heart some prayer-Slokas, Stotras and repeat them as soon as you sit in the Asana before starting Japa or meditation. This will elevate the mind quickly.

10. **Have Satsanga:** Have constant Satsanga. Give up bad company, smoking, meat and alcoholic liquors entirely. Do not develop any evil habits. Deliberately exert to develop positive virtues.

11. **Fast:** Fast on Ekadasi or live on milk and fruits only.

12. **Japa Maala:** Have a Japa Maala (rosary) round your neck or in your pocket or underneath your pillow at night.

13. **Observe Mauna:** Observe Mauna (vow of silence) for a couple of hours daily.

14. **Discipline of Speech:** Speak the truth at all cost. Speak a little. Speak sweetly. Always utter

encouraging words. Never condemn or discourage. Do not raise your voice and shout.

15. **Be Content:** Reduce your wants. If you have four shirts, reduce the number to three or two. Lead a happy, contented life. Be mentally detached. Avoid unnecessary worry. Have plain living and high thinking. Share what you have with others.

16. **Practise Love:** Never hurt anybody (Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah). Control anger by love, Kshama (forgiveness) and Daya (compassion).

17. **Be Self-reliant:** Do not depend upon servants. Self-reliance is the highest of all virtues.

18. **Self-analysis:** Think of the mistakes you have committed during the course of the day, just before retiring to bed (self-analysis). Keep daily spiritual diary and self-correction register. Do not brood over past mistakes.

19. **Do Your Duty:** Remember that death is awaiting you at every moment. Never fail to fulfil your duties. Have pure conduct (Sadachara).

20. **Remember God and Surrender:** Think of God as soon as you wake up and just before you go to sleep and at other times. Repeat His Name always. Surrender yourself completely to God (Saranagati).

Om Santih Santih Santih!

This is the essence of all spiritual Sadhanas. This will lead you to Moksha. All these Niyamas or spiritual canons must be rigidly observed. You must not give leniency to the mind.

APPENDIX (iv)

SADHANA TATTVA

OR

THE SCIENCE OF SEVEN CULTURES

For Quick Evolution of the Human Soul

INTRODUCTION

(a) An ounce of practice is better than tons of theory. Practise Yoga, Religion and Philosophy in daily life and attain Self-realisation.

(b) These thirty-two instructions give the essence of the Eternal Religion (Sanatana Dharma) in its purest form. They are suitable for modern busy householders with fixed hours of work. Modify them to suit your convenience and increase the period gradually.

(c) In the beginning take only a few practicable resolves which form a small but definite advance over your present habits and character. In case of ill-health, pressure of work or unavoidable engagements replace your active Sadhana by frequent remembrance of God.

HEALTH CULTURE

1. Eat Moderately. Take light and simple food. Offer it to God before you eat. Have a balanced diet.

2. Avoid chillies, garlic, onions, tamarind, etc., as far as possible. Give up tea, coffee, smoking, betels, meat and wine entirely.

3. Fast on Ekadasi days. Take milk, fruits or roots only.

4. Practise Yoga Asanas or physical exercises for fifteen to thirty minutes every day. Take a long walk or play some vigorous games daily.

ENERGY CULTURE

5. Observe silence (Mauna) for two hours daily and four to eight hours on Sundays.

6. Observe celibacy according to your age and circumstances. Restrict the indulgence to once a month. Decrease it gradually to once a year. Finally take a vow of abstinence for whole life.

ETHICAL CULTURE

7. Speak the TRUTH. Speak little. Speak kindly. Speak sweetly.

8. Do not injure anyone in thought, word or deed. Be kind to all.

9. Be sincere, straightforward and open hearted in your talks and dealings.

10. Be honest. Earn by the sweat of your brow. Do not accept any money, things or favour unless earned lawfully. Develop nobility and integrity.

11. Control fits of anger by serenity, patience, love, mercy and tolerance. Forget and forgive. Adapt yourself to men and events.

WILL CULTURE

12. Live without sugar for a week or a month. Give up salt on Sundays.

13. Give up cards, novels, cinemas and clubs. Fly from evil company. Avoid discussions with materialists. Do not mix with persons who have no faith in God or who criticise your Sadhana.

14. Curtail your wants. Reduce your possessions. Have plain living and high thinking.

HEART CULTURE

15. Doing good to others is the highest religion. Do some selfless service for a few hours every week, without egoism or expectation of reward. Do your worldly duties in the same spirit. Work is worship. Dedicate it to God.

16. Give two to ten per cent of your income in charity every month. Share what you have with others. Let the world be your family. Remove selfishness.

17. Be humble and prostrate yourself to all beings mentally. Feel the Divine Presence everywhere. Give up vanity, pride and hypocrisy.

18. Have unwavering faith in God, the Gita and your Guru. Make a total self surrender to God and pray: "Thy Will be done; I want nothing." Submit to the Divine Will in all events and happenings with equanimity.

19. See God in all beings and love them as your own Self. Do not hate anyone.

20. Remember God at all times or, at least, on rising from bed, during a pause in work and before going to bed. Keep a Maala in your pocket.

PSYCHIC CULTURE

21. Study one chapter or ten to twenty-five verses of the Gita with meaning, daily. Learn Sanskrit, at least sufficient to understand the Gita in original.

22. Memorise the whole of the Gita, gradually. Keep it always in your pocket.

23. Read the Ramayana, the Bhagavata, the Upanishads, the Yogavasishtha or other religious books daily or on holidays.

24. Attend religious meetings, Kirtans and Satsanga of saints at every opportunity. Organise such functions on Sundays or holidays.

25. Visit a temple or place of worship at least once a week and arrange to hold Kirtans or discourses there.

26. Spend holidays and leave-period, when possible, in the company of saints or practise Sadhana at holy places in seclusion.

SPIRITUAL CULTURE

27. Go to bed early. Get up at four o'clock. Answer calls of nature, clean your mouth and take a bath.

28. Recite some prayers and Kirtan Dhvanis. Practise Pranayama, Japa and meditation from five to six o'clock. Sit on Padma, Siddha, or Sukha Asana throughout, without movement, by gradual practice.

29. Perform your daily Sandhya, Gayatri Japa, Nityakarma and worship, if any.

30. Write your favourite Mantra or Name of God in a note book for ten to thirty minutes, daily.

31. Sing the Names of God (Kirtan), prayers, Stotras and Bhajans for half to one hour at night with family and friends.

32. Make annual resolves on the above lines. Regularity, tenacity and fixity are essential. Record your Sadhana in a spiritual diary daily. Review it every month and correct your failures.

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

O adorable Lord of Mercy and Love!
Salutations and Prostrations unto Thee.
Thou art Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute.
Thou art Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient.
Thou art the Indweller of all beings.

Grant us an understanding heart,
Equal vision, balanced mind,
Faith, devotion and wisdom.
Grant us inner spiritual strength
To resist temptations and to control the mind.
Free us from egoism, lust, greed, hatred,
anger and jealousy.
Fill our hearts with divine virtues.

Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms.
Let us ever remember Thee.
Let us ever sing Thy glories.
Let Thy Name be ever on our lips.
Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever.

—Swami Sivananda.

APPENDIX (vi)

SOME MEMORABLE DATES

IN SWAMI SIVANANDA'S LIFE AND MISSION

Advent on earth	8.9.1887
Embraced Sannyasa .	1.6.1924
Settled on the present Ashram site .	17.1.1934
Established the Charitable Dispensary .	17.1.1934
Founded The Divine Life Trust Society	13.1.1936
"The Divine Life" Magazine commenced .	1.9.1938
The Sivananda Publication League established .	29.1.1939
The Divine Life Society registered .	16.4.1939
Bhajan Hall opened	2.4.1942
Akhanda (non-stop) Kirtan of Maha-Mantra commenced in Bhajan Hall . .	3.12.1943
Visvanath Mandir consecrated	31.12.1943
The Sivananda Ayurvedic Pharmacy established . .	6.5.1945
All-World Religions' Federation constituted	28.12.1945
All-World Sadhus' Federation constituted. . .	19.2.1947
The Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy established	3.7.1948
The Sivananda Art Studio opened .	25.2.1949
All-India & Ceylon Tour commenced . . .	9.9.1950
Dispensary upgraded as General Hospital.	28.12.1950
The Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy Press established	20.9.1951
World-Parliament of Religions held. .	3-5.4.1953
The Sivananda Eye Hospital established .	1.6.1956
The Sivananda Mandir consecrated	8.9.1956
The Sivananda Pillar consecrated.	23.5.1958
The Sivananda Literature Institute established	8.9.1958
The Sivananda Literature Dissemination Committee formed . .	20.7.1959
Entered Mahasamadhi .	14.7.1963

APPENDIX (vii)

COMPLETE WORKS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

Adhyatma Yoga
Advice to Women
All About Hinduism
Ambrosia
Amrita Gita
Analects of Sivananda
Ananda Gita
Ananda Lahari
Aphorisms
Ashrams and Saints
Asthma
Autobiography of Swami Sivananda
Bazaar Drugs
Beauties of Ramayana
Bliss Divine
Blood-pressure
Boon to Diabetics
Brahma Sutras, I and II
Brahma Vidya Vilas
Brahmacharya Drama
Brihadaranyaka Upanishad
Care of the Eyes
Chhandogya Upanishad
Children's Divine Treasure
Constipation, Its Causes and Cure
Concentration and Meditation
Conquest of Anger
Conquest of Fear
Conquest of Mind
Conversations on Yoga
Correspondence Courses in Yoga
Daily Meditations
Daily Readings
Devi Mahatmya
Dhyana Yoga
Dialogues from the Upanishads
Divine Life Drama
Divine Life for Children
Divine Nectar
Divine Stories
Divine Treasure
Doon Lectures
Easy Path to God-realisation
Easy Steps to Yoga
Education for Perfection
Elixir Divine
Epistles of Sivananda
Essays on Philosophy
Essence of Bhakti Yoga
Essence of Principal Upanishads
Essence of Ramayana
Essence of Teachings
Essence of the Gita
Essence of Vedanta

Essence of Yoga
Ethical Teachings
Ethics of the Bhagavad Gita
Family Doctor
First Aid
First Lessons in Vedanta
Gems of Prayers
Gems of Wisdom
Gita for the Blind
Gita Meditations
God Exists
God-realisation
Gospel of Divine Life
Great Men and Women
Guide to God-realisation
Guiding Lights, I and II
Guru and Disciple
Guru Bhakti Yoga
Guru Tattva
Hatha Yoga
Health and Diet
Health and Happiness
Health and Hygiene
Health and Long Life
Heart of Sivananda
Himalaya Jyoti
Hindu Fasts and Festivals
Hindu Gods and Goddesses
Home Nursing
Home Physician
Home Remedies
How to Become a Yogi
How to Become Rich
How to Cultivate Virtues & Eradicate Vices
How to Get Sound Sleep
How to Get Vairagya
How to Live 100 Years
Idol Worship
Illuminating Messages, I and II
Illuminating Stories
Illuminating Teachings
Immortal Teachings
In the Hours of Communion
Inspiring Letters, I to XIII
Inspiring Messages
Inspiring Songs and Kirtans
Inspiring Stories
Inspiring Talks of Gurudev Sivananda
Japa Yoga
Jivanmukta Gita
Jnana Ganga
Jnana Jyoti
Jnana Yoga
Joy-Bliss-Immortality
Know Thyself
Kundalini Yoga
Lectures on Yoga and Vedanta
Letters That Transform
Life and Teachings of Lord Jesus
Light Divine
Light on Yoga Sadhana
Light, Power and Wisdom
Lives of Saints, I and II
Lord Krishna, His Lilas and Teachings
Lord Shanmukha and His Worship
Lord Siva and His Worship
Maha Yoga
Massage

Message to Mankind
Mind, Its Mysteries and Control
Moksha Gita
Moral and Spiritual Regeneration
Mother Ganga
Music As Yoga
Narada Bhakti Sutras
Necessity for Sannyasa
Nectar Drops
Parables of Sivananda
Peace and Perfection
Pearls of Wisdom
Pearls on the Shore of Wisdom
Perennial Teachings
Philosophical Stories
Philosophy and Meditation on Om
Philosophy and Yoga
Philosophy of Dreams
Philosophy of Life
Pilgrimage to Badri and Kailas
Practice of Bhakti Yoga
Pocket Prayer Book
Practical Guide for Students of Yoga
Practical Household Remedies
Practical Lessons in Yoga
Practice of Ayurveda
Practice of Brahmacharya
Practice of Karma Yoga
Practice of Nature Cure
Practice of Vedanta
Practice of Yoga
Precepts for Practice
Principal Upanishads, I and II
Pushpanjali
Radha's Prem
Radiant Health Through Yoga
Radio Talks
Raja Yoga
Ramayana Drama
Religious Education
Revelation
Sadhana
Sadhana Chatushtaya
Saint Alavandar
Saints and Sages
Samadhi Yoga
Sangeeta Bhagavata
Sangita Leela Yoga
Sankirtan Yoga
Sarvagita Sara
Satsanga and Svadhyaya
Satsanga Bhavan Lectures
Sayings of Sivananda
Science of Pranayama
Science of Reality
Secret of Self-realisation
Select Teachings
Self-Knowledge
Self-realisation
Sermonettes of Sivananda
Shraddhanjali
Siva Gita
Siva Leelas
Siva's Letters to Paramananda
Siva's Teachings, A to Z
Siva's Treasure
Sivananda Smriti
Sivananda Upanishad

Sivananda Vani
Sivananda's Elixir
Sivananda's Lectures:
All-India Tour
Sivananda's Letters
to Gajanan
Sivanandaism
Sixty-six Nayanar Saints
So Says Sivananda
Spiritual Awakener
Spiritual Experiences
Spiritual Lessons, I and II
Spiritual Stories
Spiritual Treasure
Srimad Bhagavad Gita
Steps to Self-realisation
Sthree Dharma
Stories from Mahabharata
Stories from Yogavasishtha
Story of My Tour
Stotra Chintamani
Stotra Pancha Ratna
Stotra Ratnamala
Students' Success in Life
Studies in Western
Philosophy
Sure Ways for Success in Life
and God-realisation
Swara Yoga
Tantra, Nada and Kriya Yoga
Telegraphic Messages
Temples in India
Ten Upanishads
The Gateway to Bliss
Thought-Power
Triple Yoga
True Education
Tuberculosis
Unity of Religions
Universal Moral Lessons
Upanishad Drama
Upanishad for Busy People
Upanishads for Layman
Vairagya Mala
Vedanta in Daily Life
Vedanta Jyoti
Voice of Sivananda
Voice of the Himalayas
Waves of Bliss
Waves of Ganga
What Becomes of the Soul
After Death
Wisdom in Humour
Wisdom Nectar
Wisdom Sparks
World Parliament of Religions
World Peace
World Religions
Yoga and Realisation
Yoga Asanas
Yoga for the Modern Man
Yoga for the West
Yoga in Daily Life
Yoga Kundalini Upanishad
Yoga Maharnava
Yoga of Synthesis
Yoga Samhita
Yoga Sastra of Siva
Yoga Teachings
Yoga Way to Peace
Yoga, Questions and Answers
Yoga-Vedanta Dictionary
Yoga-Vedanta Sutras,
I and II
Yogic and Vedantic Sadhana
Yogic Home Exercises

GLOSSARY

Abhimana: ego; pride; identification with the body.

Abhyasa: reiteration or repetition, study.

Adhyatma: pertaining to the self/Self; spiritual.

Adhyatma Bhumika: spiritual plane or background; spiritual knowledge.

Advaita: non-dual, monism.

Ajnana: spiritual ignorance; it has two powers (1) Avarana—concealment: this power conceals the real nature of Brahman, (2) Vikshepa—projection: this power gives rise to the illusion of name and form.

Akhanda: unbroken, continuous, non-stop; indivisible.

Ahimsa: non-injury in thought, speech, action or deed and total absence of hatred.

Anasakta: a person with no attachment.

Antahkaran(a): the inner instrument or organ of knowledge. It is fourfold: mind, ego, intellect and subconscious mind or Chitta.

Anushthan(a): a preparatory act to follow a specific spiritual practice as per plan or resolve.

Apara Vidya: lower knowledge, worldly knowledge.

Aptavakya: reliable, authentic statement, usually of Vedas.

Arati: waving the light before the Lord as a part of ceremonial worship.

Artha: an object of desire, wealth.

Asakti: craving for sensual pleasures.

Asana: seat, special seat, posture; Yogasana—a system of exercise.

Ashram: hermitage; one of the four stages of life.

Ashram: Sivananda Ashram

Asura: demon.

Asuric: demoniac; the evil tendencies in man.

Avarana: the veil of ignorance/concealment; see Ajnana.

Avatara: Incarnation; one who descends, God-with-us.

Avidya: ignorance, nescience

Ayurveda: traditional Indian science of medicine.

Banke Bihariji: the Form of Lord Krishna in the temple of Vrindavan.

Basti: hamlet.

Bhangi: a low caste Hindu, a sweeper.

Bhashya: commentary.

Bhiksha: food alms to a sannyasi.

Brahma(n): the Absolute Reality, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute

Brahmachari: a celibate; one who is in the preparatory stage prior to Sannyasa; first stage of life of studentship under a Guru.

Brahmacharya: celibacy, purity.

Brahma Jnana: direct knowledge of Brahman.

Brahmajnani: a knower of Brahman.

Brahma Tattva: The Cosmic Principle.

Brahma Vidya: science of absolute Wisdom.

Brahmin: a seeker of Brahman; a higher caste Hindu.

Buddhi: intellect; the discriminating faculty.

Charanamrit: the water after bathing a deity or washing the feet of a saint.

Chitta: subconscious mind; mind-stuff.

Chutney: strong pungent relish of fruits, chillies, etc.

Darshan(a): seeing with reverence or devotion, glimpse of a deity or a holy person.

Daya: mercy; tenderness of the heart.

Deendayal: (The Lord who is) merciful towards the poor, afflicted, miserable.

Deergha Sapana: a long dream; the long dream like illusion that the world is real.

Dehadhayas(a): the wrong identification of oneself with the body instead of Atman—this is the root cause of our bondage.

Dharmashala: A charity house providing free accommadation.

Dharana: Concentration; one of the steps of Rajayoga.

Dvaitavada Siddhanta: the philosophy of dualism.

Ghat: steps leading to river, wharf.

Ghee: refined butter.

Grihasthashram(a): the second stage of life of fulfilling worldly duties.

Grihasthi: a householder, one who is in the second stage of life.

Guna: quality born of Nature: Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.

Guru: the spiritual preceptor, a teacher.

Halwai: sweetmeat seller.

Jagadguru: World Teacher.

Jagat: the world.

Jagat Kalpana: the world conceived through senses is merely a mental projection.

Japa: repetition of the Lord's Name or a Mantra or consecrated words.

Jijnasu: one who aspires after Knowledge, spiritual aspirant.

Jiva, Jivatma: an individual soul.

Jiva kalpana: the illusion of duality between the Self and the Brahman.

Jnana: Knowledge of the Reality, Wisdom.

Jnana-ganga: a continuous stream of (spiritual/sacred) writings.

Jnanayoga: the path of Knowledge.

Jnani: a knower of the Brahman.

Kalpana: imagination, mental thought/projection.

Kama: desire, passion, lust; legitimate desires.

Karma: action, actions operating through the Law of cause and effect.

Karma-bandhan(a): bondage caused by the actions, rebirth on account of this.

Karma-bhog: to reap the fruits of Karma.

Karma-phala: the fruits/result of Karma.

Karma-phala-tyaga: renouncing the desire for fruits of Karma.

Karma-Yoga: the Yoga of selfess service/action.

Kartavya Karma: The activity which ought to be done (for attaining the Goal of life).

Karuna: compassion, mercy.

Kashi: Benaras, the seat of Lord Vishwanath.

Keval Advaita Siddhanta: the principle of non-dual One Existence pervading all the beings and things.

Kirtan: loud singing of Lord's Name and glory in different tunes.

Krodha: anger.

Kshama: forgiveness.

Kshetra: a charity house providing free food.

Kumkum: red powder used on forehead of a married woman and also used in Puja.

Kutir: hermitage, hut.

Kutir: Gurdev's hermitage near Sivananda Ashram.

Langar: kitchen (providing free food).

Mada: arrogance.

Mahamandaleswar: a religious head of certain religious institutions with large establishment and following.

Mahant: the founder or the head of a religious institution.

Mahapurusha: a great man, a great soul, the supreme Lord.

Maharaj: a way of addressing showing reverence.

Mahasamadhi: the final merging of the soul with Brahman; abandoning the body, final emancipation.

Mahatma: a great soul, a saint.

Mala: dirt, impurity

Maala, Japa Maala: rosary; garland.

Maitri: friendship.

Maryada Purusha: a great being acting according to conventions, rituals, etc. although being beyond all these.

Maryada Purushottam(a): The greatest Being (Lord Rama) acting as per the social and other norms.

Mast: in one's own (ecstatic) mood.

Matsarya: envy, jealousy.

Maya: the illusory power of Brahman which is responsible for ignorance, bondage and veil; Para Shakti—the fundamental power, the cause of creation.

Mithya: unreal, illusory, non-eternal.

Moha: dillusion caused by wrong thinking, false identification and deluded attachment.

Moksha: Liberation, freedom from birth and death, the ultimate Experience.

Mauna: abstinence from speech, self-imposed silence.

Mauni: one who observes Mauna.

Mukti: liberation.

Mula Prakriti: the fundamental Nature.

Mutt, Math: monastery, an institution of monks.

Naivedya: eatables offered to a deity (it is distributed as Prasad after the Arati).

Nava-vidha (Navadha) Bhakti: the path of devotion in nine modes.

Nirlipta: non-attached, living in the world like a lotus in water.

Nirmohi: free from delusion and deluded attachment.

Nirupadhic: free from limiting adjucnts.

Nirvaira: free from hostility or grudge.

Nishkam(a): without desire.

Nishkam Karma/Seva: action without selfish motive; selfless service.

Nivritti Marga: the path of withdrawing from worldly activities.

Niyama: observances, the second step in Rajayoga; it includes purity, contentment, austerity, study and surrender to God.

Padmasana: the lotus pose, a meditative posture.

Pramana: logical validation or conclusion; true knowledge; an instrument for attaining true knowledge; authoritative assurance.

Pranam: prostration.

Para: the highest, the supreme.

Parabhumika: the supreme State.

Para-shakti: the supreme Power.

Para-Vidya: the supreme Knowledge.

Parampara: lineage; tradition; the lineage of Guru and disciple.

Paratpara: Supreme, absolute.

Parikrama: going round a deity or a place of worship, reverential clockwise circumambulation.

Paropakara: benevolence, philanthropy, helping others selflessly.

Peeth: a seat of a faith or a pontiff.

Pradakshana/Pradakshina: see Parikrama.

Prakriti: Nature.

Prana: vital energy, life force.

Pranayama: regulation and restraint of breath.

Prapancha: the world.

Prasad: food dedicated to a deity during worship and eaten by devotees as something sacred.

Pratyahara: complete control of senses; withdrawal of mind from the senses like tortoise withdrawing its limbs.

Pravritti: (worldly) activity.

Prema: love, devotion.

Puja, Pooja: worship, adoration.

Pujari: priest doing ritual worship.

Punya: charitable, moral or religious deed; the fruit of such deed, righteousness, etc.

Purascharana: an observance consisting of the repetition of a Mantra as many lakh times, as there are syllables in the Mantra.

Puranas: the eighteen Hindu mythological scriptures written by Vyasa.

Purna: perfect, full, absolute.

Purusha: the supreme Being, the Self which abides in all the beings.

Purushartha: human effort, human effort for the four accepted objectives of righteousness, earning wealth, worldly gratification and Liberation.

Pushpanjali: offering at the end of Puja usually of flowers.

Rajas/Rajoguna: one of the three aspects of cosmic energy, the principle of dynamism in Nature which brings about all change, activity, passion, restlessness.

Rishi: sage, one who has attained the spiritual knowledge, seer.

Sadhana: spiritual practice.

Sadhu: a pious person, Sannyasin.

Samadhi: the state of superconsciousness; death of an ascetic; the place of interment of a holy man.

Samadhi Mandir/Shrine: the Shrine of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji in Sivananda Ashram where these talks were delivered.

Samaj: society, institution, association.

Samkirtan: group singing of devotional songs eulogising God.

Samskara: mental impression, sub-conscious tendency.

Samyam: perfect restraint, an all complete condition of balance and repose, concentration, meditation and samadhi.

Sannyasi(n): a monk, one who has renunciated worldly attachment and things, selfish motives and desires.

Saptah: a week.

Saraswati: The Goddess of knowledge, learning, art, purity; a supplementary to name of sannyasins of a certain lineage.

Satsanga: association with the wise, spiritual practices in a group.

Satsangi: one who attends Satsanga.

Sattva, Sattva-guna: purity, the principle of balance and wisdom.

Satya(m): truth.

Sashtanga dandavat namaskar(a): reverence shown by prostrating by lying fully stretched on the ground, face downwards, touching eight limbs to the ground.

Saubhagya: good fortune, a woman's married state with husband living.

Saubhagyavati: married woman whose husband is alive, she puts on various ornaments and adorns Kumkum on the forehead.

Seva: service.

Sevak: assistant, attendant.

Shakti/Parashakti: the cosmic Power, the dynamic aspect of Brahman.

Shraddha: faith with devotion.

Shreya: truly beneficial (for attaining the Goal of life).

Subheccha: good desire; the first of the seven stages of Knowledge.

Sudra: the lowest of the four categories of Hindu social class structure.

Siddha (Purusha): one who has attained supernatural spritual power.

Siddhasana: a meditative pose.

Siddhi: supernatural powers; attainment.

Siddhant(a): established tenet, doctrine or principle.

Sloka: stanza; a meter with four parts, quatrain.

Sthitaprajna: a stable minded person; one whose mind is fixed in the Knoweldge of the cosmic Being and consequently free from the vicissitudes of likes and dislikes, hopes and despair, pleasure and suffering, etc.

Stotra: a hymn of praise, a metrical song of eulogy.

Stuti: a hymn of worship, prayer; eulogy.

Sukhasana: a meditative pose.

Surya-namaskara: offering worship to the Sun; one type of exercise.

Swadhyaya: study of scriptures; study.

Swastikasana: a meditative pose.

Tamas, Tamoguna: ignorance, inertia, darkness, illusion, one of the three qualities of Maya suggesting negative qualities.

Tapa(s), Tapascharya, Tapasya: austerity, penance, purificatory action, ascetic self-denial.

Tapatraya: the three types of afflictions.

Titiksha: forbearance, endurance.

Titikshu: one who is cool and collected in the face of difficulties, misery etc.

Tattva: Reality, Principle, the ultimate Element, Essence.

Tattva-vetta: a knower of Tattva.

Tulasi: a kind of sacred plant, leaves of that plant.

Tyaga: renunciation.

Tyagi: one who has renounced everything, an ascetic.

Upanishads: knowledge portion of Vedas, texts dealing with the ultimate Truth and its Realisation.

Upasana: worship, devout meditation.

Vaidya: Ayurvedic physician.

Vairagya: dispassion, indifference towards sensual objects and enjoyments born as a result of spiritual discrimination, the second of the four prerequisites of Knowledge.

Veda(s): the four foremost and ancient authentic scriputure of the Hindus coming out of Revelation and therefore free from imperfections.

Vedanta: the concluding part of Vedas, the Upanishads.

Vedanta Darshan(a): one of the six systems of Hindu philosophy.

Vibhuti: a godman; a divine person with superhuman power; sacred ashes.

Vichara: inquiry into the nature of the Real and the unreal; Atmic enquiry.

Vidya: knowledge, learning; an art or science of attaining knowledge.

Vidya Guru: The preceptor of knowledge.

Vikshepa: tossing of the mind, distraction, resting of the mind on things other than the Absolute; the second of the four obstacles to Samadhi state: the second of the three defects of self causing the veil.

Vikshepa Shakti: the nescience power causing awareness of material world only; see Ajnana.

Virakti: non-attachment to worldly things and sensual pleasures.

Vishva: the world, universe.

Vrindavan(a): the place of Lilas of Lord Krishna, a holy place where the temple of Banke-Bihariji is situated.

Vipareeta Jnana: perverted or wrong knowledge—I am the body, the world is real—and not recognising the Self, the Reality.

Vivek(a): discrimination between the Real and unreal.

Vrata: a spiritual vow of abstinence, observance of such a vow.

Vritti: thought, thought wave, mental modification caused by ignorance.

Yajna: ceremonial performance or self-sacrifice for public welfare and benevolence.

Yajna (Rajasuya): The Yajna performed at the time of coronation of a king.

Yama: restraint; vow; the first step in Rajayoga, it includes Ahimsa, Satya, non-stealing, abstinence and non-accumulation or sense of mine-ness.

Yoga: union; Union of Self with Brahman; unruffled state of mind in all conditions.

Yogagni: the fire created from Yoga that destroys desires and attachments.

Yoga-Darshan(a): Maharshi Patanjali's eight-limbed Yoga.

Yogarudha: established in Yoga.

Yogi: one who practises Yoga.

SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA

AN APOSTLE OF PEACE AND EMBODIMENT OF QUINTESSENCE OF INDIA'S SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Revered Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji's worthy spiritual successor has been referred to as follows, "If one wants to see boldness of spirit behind a slender appearance, irrevertible command of heart behind a benign face, unwavering peace of mind behind dynamism of action, impersonal detachment behind personal love and care—all at once in a single person, one cannot do better than meet Swami Chidananda."

Born on 24th September, 1916, into a wealthy Brahmin family in South India, Swami Chidananda absorbed love for tradition and respect for rituals. At Loyola College, Madras (now Chennai), Swamiji had a brilliant scholastic career. The ideals and teachings of Jesus made a deep impression in his heart, and he was able to synthesize them with all that is best and noble in Hindu Culture. The two profound influences in Swamiji's life were the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and the example of his Gurudev, Sri Swami Sivananda. He joined Gurudev in 1943 and from then on the Ashram and the lofty ideals of The Divine Life Society became home and field of service for him.

Swami Chidananda was born with an insatiable zeal to serve the sick and the suffering. Even in childhood he built huts for lepers on the lawns of his home and looked after them as though they were deities.

Swami Sivananda said about his spiritual son and beloved disciple:

"Chidananda is a Jivanmukta, a great Saint, an ideal Yogi, a Para-Bhakta and a great sage. Swami Chidananda is all this and much more. He was a great Yogi and Saint in his previous birth itself. His lectures are the outpouring of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom. And he is a practical Vedantin, his words have tremendous power. He is born to fulfil a great mission."

Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj attained Mahasamadhi on 28th August, 2008.

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